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INNER PURITY & POLLUTION IN GREEK RELIGION

VOLUME I: EARLY GREEK RELIGION

Andrej Petrovic & Ivana Petrovic

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Volume I: Early Greek Religion

ANDREJ PETROVIC AND
IVANA PETROVIC

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Preface

The impetus to pursue the topic of inner purity and pollution came to us during the summer of 2005, while we were working in Heidelberg and Giessen respectively. Back then, we found ourselves in the most privileged position of enjoying the superb atmosphere of Heidelberg's Seminar für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik (SAGE), which, as any reliable witness would be happy to confirm, had something magical about it. Angelos Chaniotis, Thomas Corsten, Eftychia Stavrianopoulou, and all the other members of this department made sure that there was *never* a dull day: not only were we surrounded by inspiring colleagues who regularly managed to turn day-to-day departmental goings-on into thrilling intellectual adventures, but the department was at that point also host to many exciting visitors from all corners of the world, who have been enriching our thinking and our lives ever since. Among them, the Heidelberg epiphanies of Henk Versnel and Jon E. (Ted) Lendon stand out, for they both became organic parts of departmental scholarly and social life, tirelessly providing food for thought with their superb lectures and intellectual challenges, and good cheer both inside and out of the department.

At that time one of the projects pursued at SAGE under the auspices of a gargantuan Collaborative Research Centre (SFB 619) dealt with sacred regulations. The aim of the project was to systematize this group of texts with a view to exploring the phenomenon of ritual dynamics, and both authors have at various points contributed to its goals. Under the direction of first Angelos Chaniotis and then Eftychia Stavrianopoulou, we were tasked to look into issues of agency and authority in sacred regulations. In the process of doing so, we were surprised twice. First, we realized that there were a number of sacred regulations written in metre and with significant literary ambition, constructing a specific type of authority. Second, we realized that these metrical texts dealt with issues of purity, and, to be more precise, almost exclusively with issues of inner purity and pollution. And this is how it all started.

Our original idea was to provide an edition and a commentary for this class of texts, and we started work on the material almost immediately, publishing a pilot study in 2006, drafting various sections, and dealing with epigraphic bits and bobs. In 2006 we moved to Durham to take up posts at the Department of Classics and Ancient History, and continued our work at a somewhat slower pace, but accelerated considerably during our first research leave, which we were lucky enough to spend together at the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, DC in 2009–10. During nine months of

privileged existence in the CHS Elysium we realized that the material in our hands was much more complex than we had originally assumed, and that a commentary, such as we had envisaged, was not going to provide satisfying results until we had acquired a much firmer grasp of the traditions which shaped these texts, and until we had obtained a synoptic view of the topic of inner purity and pollution.

For this reason, from one project two books have emerged: the present volume, which provides an analysis of the material until the early fourth century BC, and another, now in draft, which explores the sources from Plato to Iamblichus, and which should see the light of the day in the near future. The reasons for such an arrangement of the material are provided in the Introduction.

Much of both volumes was drafted during our time at the CHS in Washington—we are most grateful to both directors, Greg Nagy and Douglas Frame, for their generosity, continuous support, and kindness during our sojourn, as well as to all of the staff; leaving at the end of the fellowship was one of life's harder hits. Not just because of the scholarship, the sheer beauty of the setting, its inspiring academic environment, intellectual (and—thanks again, Silvia Henderson!—gastronomic) delights, but also because during that year we gained many dear friends—in particular our co-fellows Miguel Herrero and Andromache Karanika, with their families. The many inspiring conversations we had with Egbert Bakker and Albert Henrichs make us miss those days often and greatly. And we have never before or since encountered a librarian so dedicated and capable as CHS's Temple Wright.

During our stay in the United States we were invited to deliver papers and test our ideas before audiences at several universities, and we would like to express our gratitude to our friends and colleagues from the United States for their wonderful hospitality and intellectual stimulation: many thanks to the Dept. of Classics at Washington University (Seattle), and especially to Jim Clauss and Alain Gowing; the Dept. of Classics in Cincinnati and Kathryn Gutzwiller; the Dept. of Classics in Bryn Mawr, and Radcliffe Edmonds III (to whom we are indebted in many ways in respect to this book); the Dept. of Classics at Stanford, and Richard Martin and Susan Stephens.

Another important moment in the development of our thinking about issues of inner purity and pollution came in July 2010, when Ralph Anderson invited us to St Andrews to participate in a superb conference on Belief and its Alternatives in Greek and Roman Religions (the volume is forthcoming with CUP). If we might identify the point in time when we started thinking about the notion of inner purity as a manifestation of belief, and sided with the pro-believers, it was on this occasion, and during conversations with Ralph, Matthew Dickie, Tom Harrison, and other participants in the conference.

In the following years we have also enjoyed opportunities to present and discuss our work at Nottingham, Newcastle, and at Münster University,

where we were invited to deliver a series of talks as part of their Exzellenzcluster 'Religion und Politik'—we thank Alexander Arweiler, Peter Funke, and Matthias Haake very much for their kind invitation and hospitality. Gunnel Ekroth kindly invited us in 2013 to deliver a series of talks in Uppsala, and we have profited greatly from conversations with her, and the colleagues and students from the History and Archaeology Departments.

Some of the ideas presented in this book were also presented at the conference of CIERGA in Liège in 2013, which coincided with the thirtieth anniversary of Robert Parker's *Miasma*, and fittingly dealt with 'Purity and Purification in the Greek World: Concepts and Practices'. We are grateful to the participants in this splendid event for their comments and suggestions, and especially so to Pierre Bonnechere, Jan-Mathieu Carbon, Stella Georgoudi, Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, and Emmanuel Voutiras.

We are also indebted to colleagues who have generously shared their work with us: Stefan Schorn kindly shared his paper on Diodorus' sources for Pythagoras' passages in advance of publication; both Radcliffe Edmonds III and Miguel Herrero shared several drafts of their work with us. Saskia Peels sent us her Ph.D. manuscript; Bernd Seidensticker provided offprints of his work; Tom Harrison shared several of his essays with us before publication.

The book has profited immensely from comments provided by colleagues and friends: Zara Chadha has not only read and commented on the book in its entirety, and in many stages of the draft's (in)completion, but she has also repeatedly scrutinized our language, polished the argumentative structure and exposition, and provided many superb insights—we owe her a great debt of gratitude. Miguel Herrero and Radcliffe Edmonds III provided feedback on the chapter dealing with the gold leaves, and Radcliffe also provided insights on our discussions of Empedocles and Pythagoras. Our Durham colleague George Boys-Stones kindly read the chapters on Empedocles, Heraclitus, Pythagoras, and the gold leaves, provided valuable comments, and clarified many issues for us. Pierre Bonnechere, Renaud Gagné, and Tom Harrison provided feedback on the Introduction. To Peter Rhodes we owe thanks for his advice on several issues of legal history and for his comments on the section dealing with the *Oresteia*.

Chris Carey has been supportive of both of us in a multitude of ways ever since we arrived in the United Kingdom from Germany, and this project was no exception. Ted Lendon, who was there at the project's start, was there for the completion too, and we have profited greatly from his comments on the concluding chapter.

We are also grateful to the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at Durham for supporting our research leave in Epiphany 2014, which allowed us to complete most of the draft. At OUP we are immensely indebted to Charlotte Loveridge, who has supported this project with great enthusiasm and energy

and has led us through intricacies of the process with angelic patience and great professionalism, and to Jeff New, who acted as a copy-editor of our manuscript and has added the final polish to it and helped us clarify many points.

Finally, Angelos Chaniotis' continuous support, encouragement, critique, and insight have been following this project since its inception, and the two of us since we first started dabbling in issues of Greek religion as Ph.D. students. As this book travelled with its authors from Heidelberg to Durham, to Washington, DC, back to Durham, and on to Berlin where we write these parting lines, he has been its most generous benefactor.

The good bits in this book are much indebted to all of the people who have supported this project; it goes without saying that the weaknesses are exclusively ours.

We completed the manuscript in the summer of 2015; with very few exceptions, we have taken the literature into account up to 2014. Fabian Meinel's monograph *Pollution and Crisis in Greek Tragedy*, published by CUP in 2015 appeared after the completion of our manuscript. Meinel's primarily literary study of pollution in Greek tragedy only briefly and occasionally engages with issues of inner purity and pollution, and presents a complementary but not overlapping view of pollution in tragedy.

We are often asked about the exact way in which we write together—the question is asked mostly out of genuine curiosity, but it is at times also raised for purposes of various administrative exercises. We often publish together because we enjoy discussing ideas with each other, and it is at times impossible even for us to trace a particular idea all the way back to Andrej or Ivana. Each of our joint publications originated during a discussion. If we both happen to be interested in pursuing the thought further, we sit down together, agree on the initial rough draft, work out the main strands of the argument, and start writing. We take turns in dictating and writing down, and often pause for further discussions, which can take a while. Once we agree on the final outline a series of individual or joint edits ensues, which often result in a complete rewrite of individual sections, and the process ends only when we have reached a mutually satisfying solution. For that reason, this book, like all of our joint outputs, represents in its entirety a truly joint endeavour.

Clarity of thought and exposition was one of our goals, but with this book we also hope to attract a readership beyond Classicists in the narrow sense of the word, and every effort has been made to limit jargon to a minimum, provide clear definitions of the discipline-specific terms, and equip a Greekless reader with enough help to venture through the volume. The most important Greek terms have regularly been transliterated and translated, and we hope that the glossary, the indices, and the summaries will facilitate rapid engagement and easy navigation.

Woodrow Wilson is attributed with the following saying: 'If a dog will not come to you after having looked you in the face, you should go home and examine your conscience.' Over the past eight years our wonderful dog Mr Miyagi has been inspiring us in many ways to think about inner purity. Even though he has not penned a single word of this book, his help was nevertheless endless. Hence, in gratitude, we dedicate this book to Mr Miyagi, a true creature of *φιλοφροσύνη*. *Κύον πιστότατε, φρὴν καθαρωτάτη, σοὶ τόδε βιβλίον τίθεμεν.*

Ivana and Andrej Petrovic
Berlin, October 2015

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A Note on Abbreviations

Abbreviations of scholarly journals follow those of *L'Année Philologique* (1928–). Where there were no extant abbreviations, we print the full title of the journal in the Bibliography.

ABBREVIATIONS OF PRIMARY SOURCES

Literary evidence: Greek authors' names and works are abbreviated according to LSJ (see: 'Abbreviations, general'). In cases of less well-known authors we print full names. Roman authors are referred to by their unabbreviated names. For the editions used, please see notes in text, and consult the list of editions preceding the Bibliography. Abbreviations of the papyri follow J. F. Oates, R. S. Bagnall, et al., *Checklist of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets*, <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html>, consulted Sept. 2015.

Epigraphic evidence: References to the epigraphic corpora follow the abbreviations of the *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (*SEG*), with exceptions included in the list that follows. Some of the more frequently mentioned epigraphic corpora are listed here for the reader's convenience:

CEG	P. A. Hansen, *Carmina Epigraphica Graeca*, Vols. I–II. Berlin, 1983–9
Herzog	R. Herzog, *Die Wunderheilungen von Epidauros. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Medizin und der Religion*. Leipzig, 1931
I.Cret.	M. Guarducci, *Inscriptiones Creticae*. Rome, 1935–50
I.Lindos	C. Blinkenberg, *Lindos. Fouilles et recherches*, II: *Fouilles de l'acropole. Inscriptions*. Berlin, 1941
IG I–XV	*Inscriptiones Graecae*. Berlin, 1873 ff.
LGS I	J. von Prott and L. Ziehen, *Leges Graecorum sacrae*. Leipzig, 1896
LGS II	L. Ziehen, *Leges Graeciae et Insularum*. Leipzig, 1906
LSAM	F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées de l'Asie mineure*. Paris, 1955
LSCG	F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques*. Paris, 1969
LSS	F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques: Supplément*. Paris, 1962
ML	R. Meiggs and D. M. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.* Oxford, 1969
NGSL	E. Lupu, *Greek Sacred Law*, Leiden and Boston, 2009[2]
SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, 1923 ff., and

<http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/supplementum-epigraphicum-graecum>

SGO I–V R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten*, Vols. I–V. Stuttgart, etc., 1998–2004

ABBREVIATIONS, GENERAL

BNP H. Cancik and H. Schneider (eds.), *Brill's New Pauly*. Leiden, 2002–10

DK H. Diels and W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 3 vols. Berlin, 1951[6]

EBGR A. Chaniotis et al., *Epigraphic Bulletin for Greek Religion*, in *Kernos: Revue internationale et pluridisciplinaire de religion grecque antique*

LSJ H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones, *A Greek–English Lexicon*. 1996[9]

OF A. Bernabé, *Orphicorum et Orphicis similium testimonia et fragmenta*. Munich and Leipzig, 2004

OLD P. G. W. Glare et al., *The Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford, 2012[2]

PMG D. Page, *Poetae Melici Graeci*. Oxford, 1962

Glossary

Below we list the most important and most common terms associated with purity and pollution; for the terms not listed here, please consult the *Index nominum et rerum*. Translations of Greek terms have been in part adopted and modified from Parker 1983, Mikalson 2010, and, to a lesser extent, from Robertson 2013. All three provide helpful discussions of the difficulties associated with terminological issues. We have aimed for consistency and clarity in our translations of the sources, at times at expense of elegance. Even so, none of the translations below may be understood as completely covering the semantic ranges of Greek terms, and represent only the closest approximations available in English (for full semantic ranges, consult LSJ). For a fuller discussion of the terminology, see the Introduction and Conclusion.

agos:	'attention of the divine' (can be both positive and negative); 'a matter of religious awe'
amplakia:	'transgression'; 'intentional error of the self'
anagnos:	'unclean'; 'defiled'; 'ritually impure'
ate:	'delusion sent by the gods'
dyssebeia:	opposite of *eusebeia*
enages:	'subject to perilous consecration'; 'in the grip of perilous power'
eudaimonia:	'to have a good *daimon*'; 'having the god on one's side'; 'enjoying divine protection', hence 'prosperity', 'happiness', 'living well'
euphemia:	'good speech'; 'religiously correct speech'; we use the term *euphemia* to denote 'good speech' rather than 'observance of sacred silence' except for those passages where we explicitly state this
eusebeia:	'proper respect (for the divine)'
hagneia:	'purity through abstinence'; 'freedom from religious contamination of every kind'
hagnos:	when applied to gods 'demanding respect'; when applied to humans: 'ritually pure'; 'uncontaminated'; 'fit to approach the gods'. NB never used for physical cleanliness
hieros:	'associated with the gods'; 'belonging to a god'; 'sacred'
hosios:	'religiously correct'
hosiotes:	'religious correctness'
katharmos:	'cleansing'; 'purification'; 'means of purification'
katharos:	'unmixed'; 'physically clean'; 'pure'; 'being in a fit state to approach the gods'

lyma:	'filth'; 'defilement'; 'what needs to be dissolved, washed or cast away'
lyssa:	'madness' (often caused by the gods)
miaino:	'to stain', but also 'to dye'. Frequently used of inner pollution, 'to taint', 'to defile'
miaros:	'defiled'; 'polluted'; when used of animals 'unclean'; generally: '(morally) abominable'
miasma:	'pollution'; metaphysical miasma: 'pollution that is not of the body'
mysaros:	'foul'; 'dirty'; 'polluted'
mysos:	'defilement'; 'uncleanliness'
phren, pl. phrenes:	'mind'; 'spirit'; 'heart'; pl. also 'thoughts'. Anatomically 'midriff'
sophrosyne:	'sound thinking'; 'safe and sound mind'; 'prudence'; 'self-control'; 'temperance'
themis:	'what is religiously correct'; 'what is established by law or customs'; 'ordinances'

Introduction

Inner Purity and Pollution in Early Greek Religion

> But the gods live in belief. Belief birthed them, they are transformed in it and through it, with it they die, but can live on as beautiful shadows. Nobody doubts that…[1]
>
> Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1931: 1

> Ancient Greek religion had little to do with belief, and a great deal to do with practice and observance of common ancestral customs.
>
> Evans 2010: 7

> Belief informs practice just as much as practice informs belief.
>
> Kindt 2012: 31

This book is about the inner purity of the ancient Greek worshipper. Its central concern is the inner stance of the ancients as they are approaching the gods and interacting with the divine realm in a ritual context. It is a book about the thoughts and internal attitudes of Greek worshippers towards the gods and their rituals, and the kind of internal attitude these worshippers envisaged their gods as expecting from them. In the wider sense, it is a book about what some are still hesitant to call 'belief' in Greek religion.

Even now, in the early twenty-first century, studies of Greek religion are still decisively influenced by ritualistic approaches which, by and large, deny the Greeks any internal investment in their ritual actions, and divorce these outward actions from their inward attitudes towards the gods. The notion of a thumb-twiddling Greek dutifully going through the motions of ritual, knee-jerkingly 'servicing the gods' when he is required to 'observe customs', caricature though this is, is not too far removed from the concept of the Greek worshipper which continues to dominate in modern scholarship.

[1] 'Aber die Götter leben im Glauben. Glaube hat sie erzeugt, in ihm und durch ihn wandeln sie sich, sterben mit ihm, können aber als schöne Schatten fortleben. Das bezweifelt niemand…'

Following a long tradition which peaked in the latter part of the twentieth century,[2] ancient Greek worshippers became what the Catholics appeared to be in the eyes of the stern Protestant writers of histories of Greek religion: performers of pomp, for '"belief" [was] a concept which hardly exists in practical Greek religion'.[3] Matthew Dickie has illuminated the ways in which Christian denominations have, in retrospect, shaped the prevalent modern view of ancient Greek religion.[4] Dickie lays bare the strong Protestant background shared by many of the most influential historians of ancient religion, among whom—since it was essentially a Protestant conviction that rituals and pomp played no part in the early Church and that the former became important only through the influence of pagan Hellenism—paganism was held to be responsible for the importance of ritual in Roman Catholicism. Hence, Northern European Protestant scholars saw in paganism what they were convinced was true of Roman Catholicism, and their distinction between a 'religion of spirit' and a 'religion of form' remains very influential for the ways Greek religion is perceived to this day. Evans' bare-knuckle Burkertianism, of which our epigraph offers an illustration, is just one indication of the continuing strength of this trend.[5]

But this was not always so. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff—in Suzanne Marchand's words, 'an archetypical exemplar of secularized Protestantism'[6]—did not shy away from entitling his masterful two-volume investigation of Greek religion *Belief of the Hellenes*, nor did he hesitate to conceptualize Greek religion as one based on the actual belief. 'No cult and no catechism makes a religion,' wrote Wilamowitz, but a 'believing heart and free action in accordance with such belief.'[7]

The notion of 'belief' is now resurfacing in the study of Greek religion.[8] Julia Kindt's statement quoted above is an early indicator of this trend.

[2] Parker 2011: 31–4 asserts that the debate on the relationship between ritual and belief in pagan religions pre-dates even that on the relationship between myth and religion. He identifies in Bernard de Fontenelle's 1686 *Histoire des oracles* an early example of the scholarly trope that pagan religion revolves around rituals and not feelings of the heart, and lists (p. 32 with n. 79) examples of this 'neo-Fontenellian approach'.

[3] Burkert 1995: 205, illuminatingly discussed by Kindt 2012: 30–4.

[4] Dickie 2002; cf. Smith 1987: 96–103 who identifies the roots of the critique of the 'mere ritualism' of pagan religion already in the sixteenth century and highlights Protestant influences on the formation of this tradition; for a discussion, Parker 2011: 33.

[5] A sample of influential concurrent attitudes is provided in Harrison 2007: 383–4 and in Versnel 2011: 544–5, who refer to statements by Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel, W. Burkert, P. Cartledge, K. Dover, M. I. Finley, J. Gould, R. Osborne, S. Price, and others. For the overview of most recent literature, Harrison 2015.

[6] Marchand 2003: 139, and *passim* on 'Kulturprotestantismus'.

[7] On the role of belief: Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1931: 9–10; definition: 12. Quotation translated from p. 13: 'Denn nicht ein Kultus oder ein Katechismus macht die Religion, sondern das gläubige Herz und das freie Handeln gemäß diesem Glauben.' On Wilamowitz's attitudes towards the study of Greek religion and his understanding of ancient Greek belief, Henrichs 1985.

[8] For a critical overview of recent contributions in the field of history of Greek religion which explicitly accept and operate with the term and concept of belief, Harrison 2015, esp. pp. 170–5.

Inspired by the recent, paradigm-testing conclusions of Henk Versnel and Robert Parker, Kindt points out time and again that practices are predicated on beliefs and that beliefs influence practices.[9] The internal investment of the Greek worshippers in the moment of sacrifice is marked out by their expectations, hopes, and faith that the gods will give back in recompense; a dedicant hopes and expects to become a recipient, and the one praying hopes for fulfilment.[10] The tide is turning, and the growing acceptance of minimal beliefs, what some scholars refer to as 'low-intensity' beliefs, implicit in rituals is pointing towards a readiness to re-evaluate our positions more fundamentally—'if historians of Greek religion have freed up only a small corner for belief,' as Thomas Harrison astutely observes, 'it is arguably because the proponents of belief have been too modest in their demands.'[11]

Casting modesty aside, we ask: where do we find the ancient Greek's 'believing heart'? This book, in its wider sense, is an attempt to answer this question. Since, as the much-repeated truth has it, Greek religion does not

[9] Along with Kindt 2012, a series of influential recent contributions points towards such a shift: Parker 2011: 1–39 dedicates a chapter to the question: 'Why believe without revelation?'; Versnel 2011 builds on the author's superb 1990 theory of inconsistencies and answers with a resounding 'yes' his question from Appendix IV, 'Did the Greeks believe in their gods?'; but see also Gagné 2013, who takes a nuanced critical stance concerning the implications of the term 'belief' (6–8). Kindt 2012 provides both a modification and the clearest articulation of the shift that has been brewing since the 1980s: one of the earliest attempts to underscore the role of belief in pagan religions as a reaction to the dominant ritualist discourse in scholarship was Paul Veyne's 'Did the Greeks Believe in their Myths?' which appeared in French in the early 1980s (1983, quoted in our bibliography in its English translation 1988). Veyne argued that the hopelessly inconsistent and contradictory myths of the Greeks bear testimony to their ability to compartmentalize their convictions about the gods to such an extent that Veyne compared Greek religion to the Balkan states and spoke of 'provinces of belief'; he even went so far as to call this process of compartmentalization 'Balkanisation'. Henk Versnel, relying on psychological studies of cognitive dissonance, came up with a more sophisticated view as he adopted inconsistencies as a system (Versnel 1990–3, vols. 1–2). He too recognized that Greek convictions do not square in absolute terms but, rather than questioning the notion of 'belief', he argued that we should embrace inconsistencies and accept them as a system, as he thought that the ancients did. In his essay 'Literature and Religion at Rome', Feeney 1998: 12–46 offers a synthesis of Veyne and Versnel, arguing that Veyne's 'provinces of belief' have 'a common foreign policy'. Key issues are summarized in Harrison 2000: 1–30, on the merits of the term 'belief', and 2007: 382–4, where the author succinctly sums up the falsehood of the dilemma between dogma and ritual as 'little more than a caricature'. On the dichotomy between belief and practice, see Harrison 2015*a*. Morgan 2015 offers a thorough discussion of *pistis/fides* in the early Roman empire and early churches, and argues that trust/belief in trustworthy gods, and the practice of divinely sponsored *pistis/fides* towards other people constitute a part of Greek and Roman religiosity; she also addresses the phenomenon of belief in the early Roman empire and perceives the gods as sponsors and guarantors of *pistis/fides* between human beings. Essentially, according to Morgan, belief in the gods is the basis of the Graeco-Roman 'totalizing world-view' which creates a 'horizon of significance' within which the worshippers interpret the world in the light of their relationship with the divine (p. 173, with quotations from Sessions 1994).

[10] For elaboration of this point in the context of Roman religion, see Linder and Scheid 1993, and King 2003.

[11] The quote and discussion of the 'low-intensity' vs. 'high-intensity' beliefs, Harrison forthcoming and on 'low-intensity,' Versnel 2011: 548.

possess a unified theological system or anything resembling a monolithic 'creed', and since public declarations of faith and unequivocal statements of belief are relatively few and insular,[12] we concentrate on the well-attested and widely spread concept of purity in Greek religion. We focus on the role of the invisible, intangible, inner purity of the worshipper in the context of ritual action in order to shed light on the Greek notion of 'belief'.

In Greek religion, the purity of all objects and every individual engaging with the gods is of paramount importance. The publication of *Miasma*, Robert Parker's landmark investigation into the role of purity and pollution in Archaic and Classical Greece, thirty years ago established the concepts of purity and pollution as vital to and all-pervasive in Greek thinking about their relationship to the gods.[13] We propose that *inner* purity was equally fundamental to the conceptualization of this relationship: elusive, immaterial, and slippery, concealed from all but the individual worshipper and the gods, and often sidelined and underappreciated in modern scholarship, inner purity crops up time and again tightly intertwined with ritual, from Hesiod onwards. To be of 'pure' inner disposition, that is, to be pure of mind, soul, or thoughts when approaching the gods and performing rituals, was, as we intend to demonstrate, an integral part of the Greek notion of piety (*eusebeia*) and an elementary prerequisite for successful interaction with the gods. A ritual perspective is fundamental to our study, since Greek texts concerning the purity of worshippers were usually formulated in the context of a sacred space or of participation in a religious ritual. Accordingly, we concentrate on the representations and evidence of ritual practices. Rather than focusing on the normative structure, institutional embeddedness, or socio-political function of the rituals, we instead trace and reconstruct the role that the inner attitudes of the worshippers played within them.

BELIEF AND INNER PURITY

A worshipper's *phronein hosia*—'thinking religiously correct thoughts'—and *sophronein*—'thinking safe thoughts', as well as approaching divinities and performing rituals with a pure *psyche*, mind, heart, or thoughts[14]—were

[12] By this we mean first and foremost the so-called 'confession inscriptions' of Lydia and Phrygia, attested late and characterized by their particular background. On these, the fundamental studies and corpora are those of Petzl 1994 and 1998, and Ricl 1995 and 1997. Bibliography on these texts is vast; the fullest overview and most up-to-date analysis is found in Chaniotis 2009*a*. Another valuable set of documents are the Asclepieian *iamata*, attested at Epidaurus from the fourth century BC onwards, on which see 'Belief and Inner Purity' in this chapter (pp. 5–6) and Ch. 1 (p. 51).

[13] Parker 1983.

[14] We summarize the key terms in 'Language of Purity' in this chapter (pp. 32–3) and in

perceived as directly determining the outcome of a ritual. A religiously correct inner disposition towards the gods, often formulated as the 'purity' of psychic or noetic organs or processes, marks out and complements ritual actions: it is a prerequisite for and facilitator of successful ritual communication. Conversely, an incorrect or a bad inner disposition, articulated as 'impure' or 'polluted', results in impiety, transgression, and ritual failure. The Greek gods, we propose, were thought to care greatly about the worshipper's inner attitudes. What mattered in the performance of cult acts was, to a large extent, the state of mind of the actor.[15]

What of the Greek notion of belief and its relationship to this inner purity? Greek possesses no term synonymous with the semantic range of the English 'belief', and indeed it could not, for Greek religion knows no systematic dogma or revelation. Greek sources do, however, classify the worshipper's inner attitudes as pure or impure. In so doing, the texts refer to the system of ritual purity in order to denote a correct or incorrect inner disposition towards the divine. Relevant formulations are occasionally expressed in rather general terms, as texts refer to the purity of *nous*, *phren*, or *psyche*. Nevertheless, even when a correct, 'pure', inner stance is articulated in such vague terms as 'pure *psyche*', or thinking 'religiously correct' or 'safe' thoughts, a close analysis of these sources reveals a degree of specificity that points towards the worshipper's acceptance of the truth of specific propositions, and hence to their belief. Inner purity as a category in Greek religion is, we aim to demonstrate, often associated with the acceptance of and compliance with *specific* ethical and religious values, especially morality, righteousness, and justice, and it can also pertain to the recognition of the *specific* nature and powers of individual divinities, or to contemplation on the significance of ritual action.

One significant example can serve to illustrate this relationship as well as the nature of our evidence for it. In the fourth century BC, a crippled Greek came to the Asclepieion at Epidaurus to be healed through ritual incubation, but he sneered at the testimonials of the healing powers of divinity, the texts inscribed on the walls of the sanctuary. The inscription at the entrance to the divine precinct, however, requested visitors to arrive in a state of inner purity, specifying that to be pure one must 'think religiously correct thoughts'. The god appeared to the doubting man in a dream: he castigated him for his scepticism, but healed him and left a permanent reminder of the man's

'The Language of Inner Purity and Pollution' in the Conclusion chapter (pp. 268–80); catalogues of principal terms in Archaic and Classical literature are provided by Bremmer 1983; Darcus 1977 (lyric poetry); Sullivan 1988 (*psyche* in Homer); Sullivan 1990 (*nous* in Hesiod); Sullivan 1995 and 1996 (Archaic material); and Sullivan 2000 (Euripides, and further bibliography on the terms *kardia*, *nous*, *phrenes*, *psyche*, and *thymos*).

[15] This is to invert Osborne's 1994: 144 statement that: 'What mattered was the performance of cult acts, not the state of mind of the actor.'

incorrect inner disposition by renaming him 'Apistos', 'Unbeliever.'[16] This fourth-century BC vignette reflects an archaic idea: that the worshipper's inner state and mindset in the moment of ritual action matters. Three hundred years earlier, in the seventh century BC, Hesiod warned against worshippers 'finding fault' (*momeuein*) with sacrifices, for 'the god resents this.' The same thought recurs throughout the intervening centuries: Xenophanes requests religiously correct (*euphemoi*) tales and purified (*katharoi*) words at libations, while in the same ritual context Theognis invokes Apollo and asks him to 'guide aright our tongue and mind'. Both authors presuppose that the individuals' inner disposition, their thoughts about the gods in the moment of ritual, have to be correct. In tragedy, inner agency, the characters' motivation for ritual actions, repeatedly forms the focal point of plots and narratives. The seat and the basis of pious behaviour (*eusebeia*) is the *phrenes*, 'thoughts', and it is through the focus on their characters' inner dispositions immediately before or during the performance of rituals that playwrights highlight the significance of the mind as a ritual agent.[17]

These discourses on the significance of the worshipper's inner disposition in the moment of ritual performance extend throughout the extant sources, from early epic poetry and the Presocratics to the third-century AD inscriptional evidence and Neoplatonic thinkers. Time and again, inner purity is stressed as a prerequisite for favourable engagement with the divine; time and again, it is the worshippers' correct mental attitude, their inner disposition, which is subject to divine inspection and assessment. What the extant evidence intimates is that one cannot be inwardly pure, cannot 'think religiously correct thoughts', without having fully formed or definite beliefs about the gods and their agency. Inner purity as a concept is, we submit, predicated on one's concrete and often reflective beliefs about what the nature and the powers of individual gods represent. In other words, rather than being a kind of internalized form of orthopraxy, such as conjuring up the correct mental pictures or emotions, or a reflex of the now increasingly fashionable view of

[16] We deal with this evidence in detail in Vol. II. For an overview of epigraphic evidence, see 'Continuities: Early Concepts of Inner Purity and Pollution and Greek Sacred Regulations' in the Conclusion chapter (pp. 280–8). Inscription at the entry to the Epidaurean Asclepieion: *ἁγνὸν χρὴ ναοῖο θυώδεος ἐντὸς ἰόντα / ἔμμεναι· ἁγνείη δ' ἐστὶ φρονεῖν ὅσια* ('He who goes inside the sweet smelling temple must be pure. Purity is to think religiously correct thoughts'); Porph. *Abst.* 2.19, Clem. Al., *Strom.* 5.1.13.3. *Pace* Bremmer's 2002 attempt to down-date the text to the first century BC/AD, we accept the views of Chaniotis 1997 and Robertson 2013. Additional support for the early dating of the inscription can be sought in the building inscriptions (ed. Prignitz 2014), which list all material and labour expenses for the Asclepius temple: they do mention the costs for inscribing of *letters on the temple* as part of the running expenses (NR.1B II, 194–5). Prignitz 2014 dates the building of the temple twenty years earlier than generally thought (between 400 and 390 BC). We treat the dating issues in detail in Vol. II. Story about Apistos: Herzog T3 = *IG* IV^2, 1, 121, 22–33. Discussion in Chaniotis 1997 and 2012; on instructive nature of *iamata* more generally, Dillon 1994.

[17] Hesiod: pp. 41–52, Xenophanes: pp. 103–14, Theognis: pp. 115–23, tragedy: pp. 127–240.

the imagistic mode of operation in Greek religion, inner purity represents evidence of a doctrinal mode of operation at work in Greek cults.[18] We posit that, if ritual efficacy and success in communication with the divine are predicated on a worshipper's correct inner disposition, then, at the very least at the level of relevant cults and in the theological thinking of certain Greek authors, this correct inner disposition amounts to a manifestation of a certain, let us dare to say, ancient Greek orthodoxy. We say 'a certain', for this orthodoxy is non-dogmatic, non-universal, and non-uniform, while simultaneously presuming validity of religious principles concerning worshippers' thoughts and inner dispositions, the principles which are understood as both normative and obliging—and a breach of these principles results, from the point of view of a particular cult or a particular author,[19] in heterodoxy.

In fact, 'orthodoxy' is to some degree an emic notion. We return to the language associated with inner purity more fully below and in the Conclusion,[20] but for the present point it will be useful to highlight that, in several authors, notions of inner purity are explicitly associated with having *straight* thoughts or opinions. The Archaic and Classical Greek formulations concerning religious matters, *orthosai noun*/*itheiai gnomai*, 'to straighten the thought'/'straight' or 'correct thoughts', and *euthyphron*, 'thinking straightly', to name just three, express ideas akin to those which the adjective *orthodoxos* and the substantive *orthodoxia* assumed centuries later.[21] For these reasons, we take pure 'inner disposition' towards divinities as possessing features which in part overlap with those of the semantic field of the term 'belief'. 'Belief', while being a culturally charged term with complex implications, is, in our view, nevertheless one which is suitable enough to denote

[18] In recent research in the cognitive science of religion, a distinction is made between doctrinal and imagistic modes of operation of religious rituals. The dichotomy between the two modes is grounded in an assessment of the frequency of repetition of religious ideas and practices. As the theory championed by Harvey Whitehouse has it, routinized religious traditions with a frequent rehearsal of practices and ideas tend to operate in doctrinal mode (and to build a large body of widely spread knowledge). Where ritual is rarely performed, the singularity of a religious experience, whose recollection and reflection form communal bonds among those who underwent the ritual together, represents a different type of religiosity glossed as 'imagistic mode'. For the theory in general, Whitehouse 1995, 2000, 2004; for attempts to apply this theory to the Graeco-Roman religions, see contributions in Martin and Pachis 2009. In our view, the doctrinal mode of religiosity among the Greeks, apart from a significant body of ritual norms (the term 'ritual norm' is borrowed from Carbon and Pirenne-Delforge 2012), is also evidenced by the routinization of rituals and by the scale and existence of a hierarchy of religious experts (what Whitehouse 2004 refers to as a 'social structure').

[19] On subsystems of purity and their individual features, see 'Methodological Outline' in this chapter (pp. 11–15), and 'Subsystems of Inner Purity on the Synchronic Axis' in the Conclusion chapter (pp. 294–8).

[20] See 'Language of Purity' in this chapter (pp. 32–3) and 'The Language of Inner Purity and Pollution' in the Conclusion chapter (pp. 268–80).

[21] On these terms, see Ch. 6 (pp. 115–23) and Ch. 8 (pp. 132–74). *Orthodoxia* is, according to LSJ s.v., first attested in Pollux (4.7), second century AD; the adjective is first attested even later.

those aspects of ancient Greek worship which stem from internalized convictions about the gods and about the inner disposition expected of the worshipper in the moment of ritual (and beyond).[22]

THE OBJECTIVES AND THE SCOPE OF THE INQUIRY

This book has two main thrusts. Our first contention is that the inner state of the ancient Greek ritual performer matters a great deal, and that it has implications both for general notions of piety and for ritual efficacy: the Greek gods are thought to pay close attention to the inner disposition of the worshipper. The correct and incorrect religious dispositions are customarily embodied in categories of inner purity and pollution, and a sizeable body of evidence, generically heterogeneous and chronologically widely spread, corroborates this view.

Our second contention is that the concept of inner purity possessed a moral dimension, and that this represented an integral part of the purity doctrine. In the epilogue to his masterful study of the Greek concept of pollution,[23] Robert Parker refers to a clause from the Epidaurian inscription introduced in the previous section: 'To be pure is to think religiously correct thoughts (*hosia*).' The moralization of ritual purity, while finding affinities in contemporary literature, Parker argues, did not mean that morality replaced traditional purity: 'Within the mainstream of Greek culture the Epidaurian couplet altered nothing'. All it did was to merely bring together two traditional requirements that pious Greeks normally kept distinct, if both of them were necessary, to be ritually pure and morally and religiously correct.[24]

Modifying Parker's view, we argue that the Epidaurian couplet changed nothing because no change was necessary. There was, in our view, no process of conflation of moral elements with the Greek concept of ritual purity, because the moral dimension of purity and pollution had always formed an integral part of the Greek purity doctrine.[25] Evidence from the Archaic and Classical periods recurrently demonstrates that the inner disposition of the worshipper, including and highlighting the moral decisions of the ritual

[22] On the history of the strand of scholarship which propounds the view of a 'desperately alien' character of Greek religion, and on problems concerning the term 'belief', Versnel 2011: 11–31 (esp. 25–31) and Appendix IV, Parker 2011: 1–39; cf. our n. 9.

[23] For a discussion of Parker's contribution to the study of Greek purity beliefs, see 'History of Scholarship' in this chapter (pp. 16–25).

[24] Parker 1983: 322–7 (quotation: p. 325). For an assessment of Parker's contribution to the discussion concerning the nexus of morality and purity, see 'History of Scholarship' in this chapter (pp. 20–1).

[25] Here, as elsewhere in this book we use the term 'doctrine' to mean 'set of beliefs'. On the term 'purity doctrine', see Petrovic and Petrovic 2014.

performer in particular, has direct implications for ritual efficacy. Already in Hesiod we detect references to the *universal* purity of a ritual actor, purity that encompasses both a bodily and a moral dimension. Ideas of justice, righteousness, and adherence to social and religious norms are tightly interwoven with the concept of inner purity. Conversely, impiety and inner impurity regularly result from the transgressions of such norms: from a murderer's absolute impurity to an adulteress's miasma of the mind, we repeatedly note links between immorality and inner impurity.

Throughout the Archaic and Classical periods we note a jostling array of discourses on inner purity which are appropriated and employed by Presocratic thinkers, poets, and Classical dramatists alike, and which are prevailingly associated with a ritual context: the texts repeatedly stress the significance of inner purity in the performance of ritual acts or during encounters with the divinities. From the narrow audiences of esoteric thinkers to that most public of arenas, the Athenian dramatic stage, the notion of inner purity was disseminated as a composite part of the Greek concept of piety. Significantly, the concept of inner purity was not restricted to the domain of 'literary religion': it is not exclusively owned by the literary tradition, nor confined to one particular genre, and divorced from the lived religion.[26] That issues of literary representation matter, we agree. We do need to take into account, as we do in individual chapters, the particular character of the literary source transmitting the concept, what Thomas Harrison calls an 'author's distinct "take"', and to avoid making unqualified statements about 'Greek religion' based on the evidence of one author. At the same time, we agree with Harrison's assertion that an excessive focus on the limitations of the literary evidence might be equally detrimental.[27] When it comes to the notion of inner purity, the overlap between the religious attitudes of individual authors and their chosen genres testifies, in our opinion, to the place of the concept in the realities of lived religion. In addition to this, we have the epigraphic sources.

In the fourth century BC the nature of the evidence of inner purity changes significantly, mainly due to three factors. Firstly, the notion of inner purity, in various guises, becomes increasingly attested in inscriptional sacred regulations.[28] This is not because the idea itself is new or 'emerges' in this era, but

[26] For a sophisticated overview of the main problems surrounding the presumed dichotomy between the realms of 'literary' and 'lived' religion, Harrison 2007: 373–84. As is clear from the individual chapters, our position is that the issue of distance between the literary representation and the lived reality of Greek religion ought to be estimated on a case-by-case basis. This concerns not just generic statements such as those which tend to be expressed in unqualified truisms concerning individual genres (for instance, that the religion of tragedy is distant from the lived religion: Mikalson 1991 vs. Sourvinou-Inwood 2003); the *functional* representation of individual practices or concepts can also vary greatly from one play to another, or from one type of intended audience to another.

[27] Harrison 2007: 373–4.

[28] Chaniotis 1997, Petrovic and Petrovic 2006, Chaniotis 2012. See the Conclusion, section 'Continuities'.

rather because the sheer volume of inscriptional evidence grows exponentially from the fourth century onwards, and many *poleis* develop refined epigraphic habits which cater for the needs of local and supra-local religious practices.[29] Secondly, and as is true of many other issues, Plato's thought provides a watershed. From the mid-fourth century onwards, we note the increasing influence of Plato on philosophical articulations of inner purity in a ritual context: the entire tradition from Theophrastus to Porphyry and Iamblichus calibrates its positions according to or against Plato's thought.[30] Finally, as geographical horizons expand and cultural contacts intensify from the Hellenistic period onwards, the evidence reflects the increasing influences of other Mediterranean religions, in particular Egyptian and Jewish, on Greek articulations of inner purity and the corresponding cultic competition.[31] To put it bluntly, inner purity, while maintaining its ritual function, acquires an additional specific symbolic value which becomes employed as a 'trademark' in a number of 'Orientalized' Greek cults and 'Hellenized' cults of Eastern divinities.[32] This leads to the competition in the religious markets of the Eastern Mediterranean and to a corresponding increase in epigraphic testimonies during the Imperial period. Often we can detect the simultaneous working of these factors: gnomic pseudepigraphs of the first century (BC/AD), such as those of Ps.-Phokylides and Ps.-Epicharmus, for instance, closely resemble the form of the inscription from Epidaurus, and at the same time they appear to be imbued with Platonic echoes and influenced by the Jewish tradition.[33] By the second and third centuries AD, all of these influences also feed into the anti-Christian and anti-pagan polemics of Clement of Alexandria, Porphyry, and Iamblichus.[34]

In light of the mass and breadth of this evidence, we divide our material over two complementary volumes. In the present volume we trace the articulations of inner purity in the pre-Platonic literature and present our readings of the concept's early history. The second volume will analyse Plato and the post-fourth-century material, as well as the epigraphic records of the Hellenistic and Imperial periods. Both volumes are guided by the same questions: when ancient Greek texts relate to the worshipper's inner purity, to the purity of the mind, of the thoughts, or of the heart and soul, what does this tell us about the relationship between an individual and the divine? How is inner purity gained, and what does it accomplish?

[29] On the ritual norms dealing with purity, Chaniotis 1997, and 2012, Robertson 2013, Petrovic 2015, and Petrovic and Petrovic 2016.

[30] On Plato's influence see Ch. 3 (pp. 73–7).

[31] On competition among Greek cults, see Chaniotis 2012, and our summary of his views in 'History of Scholarship' in this chapter (pp. 21–3).

[32] Petrovic and Petrovic 2016.

[33] Ps.-Phocylides, *Sent*. 228, first century BC, with van der Horst 1988: 28 and Wilson 2005: 72; Ps.-Epicharmus Fr. 269, with Parker 1983: 324.

[34] Clem. Al. *Strom.* 5.1.13.3; 4.22.142.1, and Porph. *Abst.* 2.19, with Parker 1983: 322–5. On Iamblichus, see Zhmud 2012: 73–7.

METHODOLOGICAL OUTLINE

The questions we pose above demand that we now disclose our basic methodological premises: we conceptualize purity as a structurally composite system, which includes a moral dimension, a system which is dynamic, and subject to change. Or, in other words, we are indebted to both Mary Douglas and Valerio Valeri. Like no other, Mary Douglas' seminal investigation into purity and pollution has exercised a decisive influence on relevant studies in cultural anthropology and religion. Until the publication of her book *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* in 1966,[35] beliefs regarding pollution and purity were perceived as a hallmark of primitive societies. Douglas' pioneering cross-cultural structuralist study treats the ideas of pollution and purity as a system which operates in all societies, ancient and modern alike. Starting from the observation that dirt is 'matter out of place',[36] she elaborates that this statement 'implies two conditions: a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order. Dirt, then, is never a unique, isolated event. Where there is dirt there is system. Dirt is the by-product of systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements'.[37] Consequently, dirt is a 'matter out of place', in so far as it is perceived as anomaly in any given system. As there are no universal categories, but each system has its own, each system has its own anomalies which are classified as polluting.[38] In order to understand the way pollution operates in each society, Douglas avers, we must perceive the system in its totality.

Furthermore, Douglas posits that the purity rules are not only systemic; they are also symbolic. She argues that a society is often symbolized as a body, which is especially evident in regard to the way it perceives its own boundaries. The more closed a society is, the more attention it pays to its own boundaries, which, in terms of pollution, translates into a more or less strict monitoring of substances which leave or enter the body.[39] Douglas' famous interpretation of the Israelite dietary rules as set out in Leviticus 11 is based on the premise that polluting foodstuff should be understood as a violation of the system as outlined in Genesis 1. Here she sees a symbolic relationship between the diet and the categories of creation: if an animal cannot be classified into a category, if it falls between the categories, it is 'out of place', an anomaly, and it is classified as polluting.[40]

[35] We quote from the second, corrected edition of the book, Douglas 1969. For a concise summary of her theory of pollution, see also Douglas 1975: 47–59.

[36] This idea stems from the eighteenth-century man of letters, Lord Chesterfield.

[37] Douglas 1969: 35.

[38] Significantly, not all elements external to the system are considered polluting, but only those which are perceived as threatening the system's boundaries; cf. Douglas 1969: 94–113.

[39] Douglas 1969: 114–28.

[40] Douglas 1969: 41–57. This specific interpretation has been challenged by numerous scholars, and Douglas 2001 offers an alternative interpretation herself. See also Klawans 2003:

In analysing the role which defilement as a concept plays in a society, Douglas particularly highlights its function as a tool of social control.[41] Pollution rules regulate behaviour and human interaction, and they are as oppressive to specific groups (such as women or members of a specific class) as are their respective societies. Especially significant are Douglas' remarks regarding the implementation of purity rules as complementary, rather than directly corresponding, to other means of social control[42]—an issue to which we return below.

Another important issue raised by Douglas, and permeating our own thinking about Greek concepts of purity and pollution, is her viewpoint on the nexus between purity and morality. In her discussion of the relationship between pollution and moral attitudes,[43] Douglas remarks that, since purity and pollution beliefs are an instrument of social control, 'the whole universe is harnessed to men's attempts to force one another into good citizenship. Thus we find that certain moral values are upheld and certain social rules defined by beliefs in dangerous contagion.'[44] She also points out, however, that 'pollution rules do not correspond closely to moral rules. Some kinds of behaviour may be judged wrong and yet not provoke pollution beliefs, while others not thought very reprehensible are held to be polluting and dangerous. Here and there we find that what is wrong is also polluting. Pollution rules only highlight a small aspect of morally disapproved behaviour.'[45] This is because ethics is far more complex to negotiate than, say, dietary regulations, and does not operate in terms of binary opposites. Whereas moral rules are general by nature and their application to a particular context is open to interpretation, 'pollution rules, by contrast with moral rules are unequivocal. They do not depend on intention or a nice balancing of rights and duties.'[46] Using the Nuer as an example, Douglas argues that their pollution beliefs do touch upon morality, but they do not completely overlap with the Nuer moral code. The pollution beliefs tend to support the accepted system of morality, but, since they operate alongside other systems of social control, if there are practical sanctions in place to curb specific forms of behaviour that are perceived as antisocial, the pollution beliefs are not likely to regulate

89–96. Klawans 2000: 9 remarks that, however differently scholars interpret Leviticus 11, they 'need to come to terms with the likelihood of a symbolic basis to the system'.

[41] Douglas 1969: 3–4; 112–13; 129–58.

[42] Douglas 1969: 142 uses patriarchy as an example and argues: 'When male dominance is accepted as a central principle of social organization and applied without inhibition and with full rights of physical coercion, beliefs in sex pollution are not likely to be highly developed. On the other hand, when the principle of male dominance is applied to the ordering of social life but is contradicted by other principles such as that of female independence, or the inherent right of women as the weaker sex to be more protected from violence than men, then sex pollution is likely to flourish.'

[43] Douglas 1969: 129–58.

[44] Douglas 1969: 3.

[45] Douglas 1969: 129.

[46] Douglas 1969: 130.

those types of behaviour, too. According to Douglas, the pollution beliefs are likely to be harnessed in order to uphold the moral code in the following scenarios:

1. 'When a situation is morally ill-defined, a pollution belief can provide a rule for determining post hoc whether infraction has taken place, or not.
2. When moral principles come into conflict, a pollution rule can reduce confusion by giving a simple focus for concern.
3. When action that is held to be morally wrong does not provoke moral indignation, belief in the harmful consequences of a pollution can have the effect of aggravating the seriousness of the offence, and so of marshaling public opinion on the side of the right.
4. When moral indignation is not reinforced by practical sanctions, pollution beliefs can provide a deterrent to wrongdoers.'[47]

In subsequent publications, Douglas re-evaluated some of her theses and offered more refined or completely revised views on some key points. Her theory of pollution has been subject to criticism on various accounts,[48] but her major contribution remains uncontested: purity and pollution are ideas which are inherent to all societies; they are not a hallmark of primitive societies, but they betray the existence of a system which can be interpreted symbolically, and they are one of the means of social control. Despite the deficiencies which have been observed by other scholars, Mary Douglas' theoretical framework remains the most coherent and practical hermeneutic tool for any, and especially a historical, investigation of ritual purity.

There is one significant theoretical corrective of Douglas' views which has influenced our thinking about purity doctrines, and structured our exposition of the material: in the second chapter of his anthropological study of the forest-dwelling people of Seram, Valerio Valeri provides a critical evaluation of various attempts to understand and conceptualize taboo and pollution.[49] In his view, the flaw in Douglas' theory is its focus on the classificatory system instead of on the subject of pollution. He argues that:

> pollution is a much more relational notion than Douglas makes out. The disorder of which pollution is the sign is not so much the residue of generic order-making as the violation of a system of specific compatibilities and incompatibilities. The subject is not polluted by its running into 'residues of the classificatory system' which are extraneous to it, but by its disregard of the implications of the classificatory position in which it finds itself. What is polluting to some is not so to others. And what is polluting at one time and place is not so at another . . . To

[47] Douglas 1969: 133.
[48] For a succinct and well-informed overview, Frevel and Nihan 2013*a*: 6–10.
[49] Valeri 2000: 43–113.

> speak of 'the system', of 'form', or of 'order' as if they were one monolithic thing is thus quite inappropriate. There are many coexisting orders of classification; what is residual to one may be central to another.[50]

In essence, then, Valeri stresses that there is no one unified system, but rather, each society has many systems operating at the same time. This is a valid and helpful observation. However, Valeri seems to overemphasize the static nature of Douglas' pollution theory.

Douglas' discussion of pollution does actually allow for a certain degree of dynamism, since she argues that, as a system of social control, ideas about pollution accommodate and adapt to other systems of control.[51] The accommodation and adaptation are processes *in time* which can in some cases be detected and mapped out on the basis of the ancient evidence: For instance, in the ancient Greek world the law provided the main system of social control alongside pollution beliefs; the phenomenon of homicide miasma is one example of how Greek beliefs about pollution changed and adapted to this parallel system. One of the major problems in the study of homicide miasma in ancient Greece has been the fact that the pollution of the homicide and the fear of possible contagious effects for the whole community dominates the discourse in the Classical sources, but seems to wane in the fourth century BC.[52] Surviving evidence suggests that in the fourth century there was a turn from the previous era in which every killing indiscriminately represented a chilling threat of pollution for an entire community. In the course of the development of the judicial procedure at Athens from the seventh until the fifth century BC, the issues of volition, intention, and motivation gain greater prominence, and the punishment for a homicide is brought into alignment with the motivation for the crime. The sentence for a homicide is no longer an automatic execution, nor is it an automatic and permanent exclusion from the ritual life of the community due to the fear of the homicide's contagious miasma. In the Classical period, if not even earlier, the trials for intentional and unintentional, and for justified and unjustified, homicide become separated. The Athenian evidence does seem to support Douglas' claim that beliefs about pollution adapt to other systems of social control, since, just as for the punishment for the homicide, the levels of pollution by killing are adjusted according to the motivation for the crime: not

[50] Valeri 2000: 71. In addition, and following Meigs 1978: 312, Valeri 2000: 102 maintains that the universal basis for the notion of pollution is a fear of decaying matter such as blood, sweat, or semen, which, once separated from the body, could enter it again and cause it to disintegrate too. For the purposes of our study, the question of the aetiology of the pollution belief as a human universal is not immediately relevant. Our focus is on the social role of miasma, not its evolutionary origins. By the time we first encounter miasma in ancient Greek sources, it is already clearly envisaged as a concept related to the sacred, as an opposite of ritual purity.

[51] Douglas 1969: 142.

[52] For a thorough discussion, Parker 1983: 104–43. See, however, Salvo 2016.

every homicide carries pollution of the same type or intensity.[53] As the law-courts became more sophisticated and more effective in dealing with various forms of homicide, the perceived impact of miasma decreased. In addition, the post-Classical sources do not treat the issue of homicide miasma with the same rigour and urgency as the Classical, which could perhaps be an indication of miasma retreating as the dominant topic of the discourse because of the law encroaching on it.

In sum, for the purposes of our study, Douglas' theory with Valeri's corrective proves most fruitful: accepting the existence of parallel subsystems at synchronic levels has determined the way we have organized the material and has crucially shaped our methodology. We have insulated individual authors and analysed their views of inner purity and pollution independently of one another, rather than importing evidence of different viewpoints into the analysis of each individual one, in order to enquire if and how they diverge from each other, and to establish their potential interrelationships only after we have securely identified their main features. Given the nature of some of our evidence, this has, in some cases, naturally required an assessment of the issues of authenticity and textual tradition in the first step.

Our discussion of inner purity and pollution is therefore rooted in the premise that miasma in Greek religion should be mapped out on both diachronic and synchronic axes: diachronic, because it is subject to change, adaptation, and ongoing negotiation with other systems of social control; synchronic, because there are many subsystems operating simultaneously in any given society. Our chapters provide insights into a number of subsystems: Hesiod addresses the needs of the Bronze Age self-sufficient farmer; Xenophanes and the Theognidea provide insights into aristocratic circles; Pythagoras addresses the members of a society; 'Orphics' create a sub-group within a society; tragedians engage with, explore, and comment on mainstream views of fifth-century Athens. Subsystems have different perspectives on miasma, and attach different weight to inner purity: for the 'Orphics' it is at the centre of the system; for Hesiod it is one of its components, but not the central one; for Xenophanes and the Theognidea it is an essential component of the system in distinct ritual situations. Sometimes we can witness clashes, tensions, or even hostilities between ancient Greek purity systems. Euripides canvasses one such clash of subsystems in his *Hippolytus*, when he presents Theseus as disparagingly castigating his son's particularly zealous quest for purity and labelling it as Orphism. In the later period, and through contact with other religions, Egyptian in particular, and especially with the emergence of Christianity, we record such clashes increasingly when they also happen at the macro-level of systems rather than in subsystems.

[53] For a discussion with bibliography, see Chaniotis 1997, and Ch. 8 (pp. 155–64).

HISTORY OF SCHOLARSHIP

Mary Douglas' assertion that ideas about impurity betray the existence of a taxonomic system which is focused on the body and which can be interpreted symbolically has proven very productive for the study of the role of purity and pollution in the ancient Greek and Roman world.[54] It was, however, a long, steep, and winding road that scholarship had to take before we arrived at the point at which ancient Greek purity doctrine could be conceptualized as a system. In his recent monograph, Renaud Gagné astutely observed that the important precursor of the scholarly interest in ancient Greek rituals of purification was a thinker who set out to demonstrate that all such purificatory rituals, from Greek to Chinese practices, are in reality an indication of Satan's presence and influence in world.[55] Writing in seventeenth-century Holland, and coming from an orthodox Calvinist background, Johannes Lomeier launched his attack against ritual practices of purification during the period of great tensions between Catholics and Protestants, when his home-city of Zutphen was occupied by the Catholic troops of Louis XIV.[56] The introduction to Lomeier's work bears testimony to the dramatic circumstances in which he was writing; subsequent chapters mirror complex political and theological debates of the day, even when these are not referred to in explicit terms. Catholicism, for Lomeier, is the natural development of pagan *superstitio*, occupying a position diametrically opposed to that of an orthodox Calvinist, who possesses true *religio*.[57] Some of the central theses of his thinking about ancient religions can be summed up as follows: pagan religions, highly ritualistic in nature, represent nothing more than a useless superstition, and provide the proof of Satan's existence. The purificatory rituals of the Greeks, along with their religion, have nothing to do with spirituality or true belief, but are false, abominable, concerned with the exterior shell rather than the inner self, focus on the ceremonial, and lack in substance.[58]

[54] For an assessment of Douglas' approach for the study of pollution in the ancient Mediterranean world and ancient Judaism, Frevel and Nihan 2013*a*: 3–43; for a discussion of her impact on the study of pollution in ancient Greece and Rome, Bradley 2012*a*. On the role of pollution and religion in ancient Rome, see now Lennon 2014.

[55] Gagné 2013.

[56] Johannes Lomeier, *Epimenides sive de veterum gentilium lustrationibus syntagma* (1681); for an excellent overview, see Gagné 2013: 112–20.

[57] See Gagné 2013: 113–14 for a discussion. We point only to the following statement from Lomeier's chapter 3 (p. 18 in the second edition, published in 1700): '*omnis ergo gentilium religio vanissima fuit superstitio, quia falsos Deos commentitio cultu celebrabant…quin et ipse Cicero omnes gentiles superstitiosos esse docet*.'

[58] Instructive is chapter 19, where Lomeier discusses *purgatio animae per ignem Spiritus Sancti vs. purgatio mundi per ignem*. In chapter 15, however, he recognizes the indebtedness of Christian thinkers to Greek philosophy, especially to Platonic, Pythagorean, and Stoic thought, and he comments on the interrelationship between the notions of justice and purity, with an

It was not until 1910, and the publication of Theodor Wächter's *Reinheitsvorschriften im griechischen Kult*, that the subject received a less biased synthesis. Wächter set himself the task of investigating Greek cathartic regulations and sketching the main spheres of their concern. Accordingly, his investigation focuses almost exclusively on ritual aspects and provides a catalogue of sources of pollutions: wrong clothes, birth, menstruation, illness, death, murder, and specific animals, plants, and metals all provide material for individual chapters, before Wächter turns to the exclusions of foreigners, slaves, women, and men from participation in rituals. For Wächter, too, superstition is the key force which shapes Greek concepts of purity: the Greeks 'invented' purificatory rituals *utilitatis causa*, to protect themselves from threatening supernatural forces or from contact with dirt (*Unreinheit*), since 'originally, men found themselves facing earthly powers, daemons, whose secretive activities intimidate them'. In the course of time, however, some of these earthly daemons acquired a higher status, and became 'higher gods, helpful to people and worshipped'.[59] This division of supernatural forces led to two types of purifications: firstly, to the 'excessive nonsense of private purification', which derives from *deisidaimonia*, the Greek 'superstition', and which expresses the Greeks' need to protect themselves from 'daemonic influences'; secondly, to *eusebeia*, which Wächter takes to denote 'cultic purity' (*kultische Reinheit*). 'Cultic purity', Wächter opines, emerged as an expression of respect for the higher gods and their holiness, and represents a manifest development in the history of Greek religion which is indicative of a transformation from a utilitarian concept of purification to a theological one.[60]

The next step in Wächter's evolutionary model is marked by the emergence of the moral dimension. The moral internalization (*Verinnerlichung*) of purity develops from cultic purity 'as its highest grade', as a reaction to excessive *deisidaimonia*. The development of moral purity is very slow, however. Referring his reader to Plato,[61] Wächter remarks that the philosophers interpreted purity symbolically as moral purity, but that their teaching found no resonance. In ritual reality, requests for moral purity appear both late and scattered. Purity, per se, possesses no moral dimension.[62]

interesting turn: what purifies the soul is also vengeful justice, expressed in acts of retribution. No doubt this is another thinly veiled exhortation to his fellow citizens against the French troops.

[59] Wächter 1910: 3: 'Ursprünglich sieht sich der Mensch überirdischen Kräften, Dämonen, gegenüber, deren geheimnisvolles Wirken er fürchtet'; 3–4: 'Allmählich entwickeln sich nun aus einem Teil dieser Dämonen die höheren Götter, die dem Menschen hilfreich sind, die er ehrt.'

[60] Wächter 1910: 3–5. [61] Wächter 1910: 4 with n. 3. Pl. *Lg*. 4.716e.

[62] In the catalogue of sources evidently dealing with moral purity, Wächter 1910: 7–10 finds himself repeatedly at pains to underplay the significance of the early evidence: '*Rheaepigramm aus Phaistos*' (= I.Cret.*I* XXIII 3; *EBGR* 1993/4: 47; 1997: 375; 2000: 198; 2007: 23) is given

Antiquated and dusty as some of Wächter's views may appear, the very acknowledgement of the existence of inner purity in Greek religion marks a significant leap forward. However, even after Lomeier's Satan departed from the discourse, some devils remained. Wächter's thinking was deeply rooted in the evolutionist paradigms which were popular among humanist scholars of his day, and which gained a great deal of their force through the technological advances of the late nineteenth century and the spectacular breakthroughs in science and engineering. The impact of the Industrial Revolution and of Darwin's theories left a lasting impression—notions of progress and of an ever-increasing complexity were arguably among the favourite intellectual buzzwords of the long nineteenth century, whizzing around academic halls with the energy of the just recently electrified trains. Wächter's notion of development, for instance, maps Greek practices on a grid which stretches from *Urzeit* to *Jetzt*, and which is based on unchallenged assumptions of a primitive atavistic stage and of a gradual, persistent, but never truly perfected process of spiritualization.

By the turn of the twentieth century assumptions of primitive beginnings and of subsequent developments in the complexity of ritual and religious thought were axiomatic, and represented by far the most dominant scholarly trope in religious studies, expressed, with some variations, on both sides of the Channel. Two influential British scholars whose works show intellectual affinities to Wächter can provide useful comparanda to illustrate his advances in the understanding of Greek religion. A famous late Victorian heavyweight and a representative of cultural Darwinism par excellence is James G. Frazer, whom Mary Douglas memorably described as a man of 'many good qualities, but originality was never one of them'.[63] In the second volume of the third edition of the *Golden Bough*, published in 1911, the notion of 'moral purity' is represented as a distinctive feature of us, the moderns, 'readers bred in religion which is saturated with the ascetic idealism of the East'.[64] For the 'savages', this mode of thought is 'utterly foreign and indeed incomprehensible', since they possess 'no high idealism, no ethereal aspiration for moral purity'. What they do, in Frazer's opinion, is determined by pragmatic concerns, and especially by notions of danger and fear.[65] The mind of a 'savage' makes no distinctions between holiness and danger; pollution is a mechanism which represents danger for a community, often 'spiritual or ghostly'.[66]

without a date (second century BC or earlier, since the text was probably re-inscribed); the fourth-century BC inscription (on dating, see our n. 16) from the entry to the Asclepieion at Epidauros is 'a poet's verses, no cultic regulation!'; Aristophanes' *kathara gnome* (see Ch. 11, pp. 241–5), is probably to be emendated to *glossa*, etc.

[63] Douglas 1969: 10.

[64] Although Frazer allows Mithraism to certain traits associated with moral purity as well: Frazer 1911: 117–18.

[65] Frazer 1911: 117–18. [66] Frazer 1911*a*: 224–5.

Jane Harrison, writing about a decade before Wächter and before the appearance of Frazer's expanded third edition, similarly states on several occasions in her *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, first published in 1903, that '*purification is placation of ghosts or underworld powers*'. Furthermore, '*spiritual* purity in our sense . . . is foreign to any primitive habit of thought . . . [it was] freedom from bad spirits and their maleficent influence'.[67] Harrison's ghosts form the counterpart to Wächter's daemons. Despite this parallel, however, this quick sketch reveals how significant a step forward Wächter made. His analysis, though fundamentally informed by Frazer and Harrison, acknowledged—if only timidly so—the existence of the notion of inner purity in Greek religion at a time when spiritual purity was considered to be either, by and large, foreign to a 'savage mind', or at best, a result of a late syncretistic hodgepodge, such as the one imagined by Ludwig Ziehen.[68] Secondly, Wächter tried to reconcile the wisdom of the day that morality has nothing to do with purity, as postulated in Erwin Rohde's authoritative study *Psyche*, with the extant evidence.[69]

Because studies of Greek religion in general tended to be decisively marked out by the evolutionary tropes of Discoveries and Rises, investigations of purity remained trapped in the tropes of the 'savage', 'the primitive', and the 'disparate'. One illustrative example of this tendency is Louis Moulinier's 1952 monograph. This general study of the pure and the impure in ancient Greek culture, which continues to be a useful collection of evidence, is a testament to the author's persistent fear of entertaining the thought that any sort of coherent system may exist. Almost deconstructionist in nature, Moulinier's investigation treats Greek concepts of purity and pollution as developments deeply rooted in the primitive, the physicality of dirt—they oppose systematization, and they are at best loosely related to each other.[70]

In some respects, Eric R. Dodds represents an intellectual successor of Wächter. In the second chapter of his influential 1951 monograph *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Dodds focuses on the fact that Homeric epics do not demonstrate any awareness of miasma as being infectious or hereditary, in contrast to the prevalence of this view in the Classical texts, and particularly in tragedy. Dodds postulates that the phenomenon of miasma had emerged in seventh-century Greece as a reflex of the primitive world-view, which he sees as a result of the shift from shame to guilt culture.[71] Accordingly, he argues that the moral dimension of purity is a late development:

[67] Harrison 1903: 53; 58–65; 77 (quotation at 53).

[68] See Ziehen (1906), 364 (= *LGS* II 148): '*illa aetate confusio religionum tanta erat et philosophorum doctrina adeo religionem invaserat, ut de ea re spondere nolim*.' Many of Ziehen's remarks from *LGS* II were received by Wächter uncritically, but, interestingly enough, he takes a more nuanced stance on issues of inner purity.

[69] See Wächter 1910: 2–5.

[70] For intellectual context, contemporary criticisms, and evaluation, see Gagné 2013: 10–15.

[71] Dodds 1951: 28–63.

> sin is a condition of the will, a disease of man's inner consciousness, whereas pollution is the automatic consequence of an action, belongs to the world of external events, and operates with the same ruthless indifference to motive as a typhoid germ. Strictly speaking, the archaic sense of guilt becomes a sense of sin only as a result of what Kardiner calls the 'internalizing' of conscience—a phenomenon which appears late and uncertainly in the Hellenic world, and does not become common until long after secular law had begun to recognize the importance of motive. The transference of the notion of purity from the magical to the moral sphere was a similarly late development: not until the closing years of the fifth century do we encounter explicit statements that clean hands are not enough—the heart must be clean also.[72]

Against this background, the significance of Robert Parker's investigation of miasma in early Greek religion is thrown into sharp relief. Parker's 1983 study is the first attempt to investigate pollution not as 'a product of the ill-focused terror that permanently invests the savage mind',[73] but as an indication of the existence of the classificatory system. Informed by Douglas, and rooted in a meticulous and comprehensive assessment of the (mostly textual) evidence, Parker's work demonstrates that the ancient Greeks, too, saw miasma and purification as classificatory tools: the Cyrenaean purity regulation distinguishes clearly between three states, sacred, profane, and polluted;[74] the author of the treatise *On the Sacred Disease* from the Hippocratic corpus asserts that 'we ourselves fix boundaries to the sanctuaries and precincts of the gods, so that nobody may cross them unless he be pure';[75] and Plato presents purification as a division 'that retains what is better but expels the worse'.[76] Parker perceives purification as a 'science of division', and asserts that it 'marks off sacred places from profane, creates special occasions, and unites individuals into groups'.[77]

Starting with an assessment of the terms the ancient Greeks used to designate impurity, purification, and the state of purity, Parker discusses biological and social events which automatically result in miasma—such as birth, death, sexual intercourse, and the shedding of blood—before moving on to miasma as a result of sacrilege, its relation to curses, disease, and bewitchment. He concludes with an overview of specific views which attempt to connect purity with salvation: Plato's philosophical redefinition of miasma, the role of purity in mystery cults, and the eschatological and soteriological implications of purity in the Pythagorean and 'Orphic' beliefs, and in Empedocles.

According to Parker, pollution makes the person affected ritually impure; it is contagious, and dangerous.[78] He distinguishes between miasma as a

[72] Dodds 1951: 36–7.
[73] Parker 1983: 2. For a succinct summary of his views, see also Parker 2004*a*.
[74] *LSS* 115 A 9–10. [75] Hp. *Morb. Sacr.* 1.106–12, quoted by Parker 1983: 19.
[76] Pl. *Sph.* 226d, discussed by Parker 1983: 18. [77] Parker 1983: 23.
[78] Parker 1983: 4.

physical contamination, which can be transmitted to others and which is effaceable by washing, and *agos* as a type of pollution which is a spontaneous and automatic consequence of any violation of the sacred, and which is manifested as divine anger. He uses the example of a corpse to illustrate this point: 'A corpse … diffuses *miasma*, but *agos* is only created if a survivor denies it the divinely sanctioned right of burial.'[79] The two types of pollution are dangerous in different ways:

> The most important difference concerns the relation of the two to the gods. To *miasma* gods seem irrelevant; it is a dangerous dirtiness that individuals rub off on one another like a physical taint. *Agos* by contrast has its source in a sacrilegious act, and the *enagēs*, as the attached genitive suggests, is in the grip of an avenging power; the reason for avoiding him is not fear of contamination but to escape being engulfed in the divine punishment that awaits him.[80]

The term Parker uses to designate the type of pollution which is not corporeal and which results from acts of sacrilege is 'metaphysical pollution'.[81]

Parker concludes that ancient Greek beliefs about pollution were related to the 'norms of an ordered existence' and were 'by-products of an ideal of order'.[82] In his Epilogue,[83] Parker briefly addresses the Epidaurian inscription, which defines purity as 'thinking *hosia*'. In his opinion, this text, and its later inscriptional echoes, represent an attempt to assimilate morality to the rules of purity, but he sees these phenomena as functioning in unison without coinciding in Greek society: the Epidaurian inscription 'did not make morality an object of religious concern for the first time; it merely assimilated the two entirely traditional requirements of *hagneia* and "thinking *hosia*". Pious Greeks may normally have seen the two things as distinct, but they had always believed both to be necessary.'[84] Parker sees 'the veiling or repudiation of what is disruptively or disgracefully physical',[85] the purity regulations, and the observance of divinely sanctioned rules of social life and morality in general as parallel phenomena which function as norms of an ordered existence. Where we depart from Parker is on the issue of morality, since we perceive the rules such as 'thinking *hosia*', which Parker sees as moral and merely parallel to purity regulations, as part and parcel of the purity system.

Since the publication of Parker's *Miasma*, there has been no attempt to systematically revisit the issue of pollution in Greek religion. The most significant shift in the scholarly perception of miasma over this period has been incited by the two extensive articles which Angelos Chaniotis has published

[79] Parker 1983: 8. On metaphysical pollution, see further this chapter (pp. 30–2).
[80] Parker 1983: 8–9.
[81] Parker 1983: 144–90; and see further 'Metaphysical Pollutions' in this chapter (pp. 29–32).
[82] Parker 1983: 325, 326. [83] Parker 1983: 322–7.
[84] Parker 1983: 324. [85] Parker 1983: 326.

on the phenomenon of inner purity.[86] Chaniotis poses two questions: when does the request for inner purity appear in the sacred regulations; and why? From the sixth until the fourth centuries BC, the inscriptional sacred regulations are only concerned with the purity of the body, and the first cult regulation which demands purity of mind appears in the mid-fourth century BC.[87] Chaniotis traces the development of the request for the purity of mind and sees several factors which may have contributed to its emergence: the development of secular law,[88] changing attitudes towards the afterlife,[89] philosophical views, and most significantly, the healing cult of Asclepius, which promoted the idea of the interdependence of disease and sin, and repentance and cure. Chaniotis discusses literary evidence, but his major focus is on the inscriptional requests for purity. He demonstrates that from the second century BC onwards we encounter a proliferation of the request for inner purity in the inscriptional evidence: alongside requests for external purity, sacred regulations demand justice, piety, and pure and honest thoughts from visitors. Such requests become standardized in the first century AD. The inscriptions tend to distinguish between bodily and inner purity and to prioritize the latter. Chaniotis interprets this as a consequence of the increased interest in the esoterical and the emphasis on individualism in the Hellenistic era,[90] but also notes that most inscriptions which request inner purity are regulations for the cults of Oriental divinities.[91] In the Imperial period, some regulations which request inner purity also state that no purification is possible for the tainted soul. The request for inner purity does not, however, replace the necessity of achieving purity of the body, and the two types of requests are often attested together. Chaniotis also considers the possible influence of Christianity on ancient Greek ideas about inner purity, and highlights the fact that, whereas some Greek texts stress that there is no purification for inner miasma, for the Christians there is no sin which cannot be redeemed.

The methodological framework of Chaniotis' investigation is ritual dynamics, and he concludes that:

> The study of this particular ritual practice reveals, I think, three dynamic aspects of rituals: transfer, semantic shifts, and competition of rituals. The idea of the purity of the mind represents the transfer of distinctions, which were first

[86] Chaniotis 1997 and 2012 with emphasis on ritual dynamics.

[87] The inscription from the Asclepieion of Epidauros, see n. 16.

[88] Chaniotis perceives the impact of the secular law on the beliefs about pollution as a 'paradigmatic case of ritual dynamics' (2012: 127).

[89] Chaniotis sees a major shift regarding Greek ideas about the afterlife in the sixth century BC when 'the idea developed that an individual's moral conduct during his lifetime justifies the expectations of a better life after death' (2012: 128). The 'Orphics', the Pythagoreans, and the Eleusinian mysteries are mentioned as possible disseminators of such ideas. According to Chaniotis, it was the changed attitude towards the afterlife that brought the idea of inner purity to the fore in Attic drama, philosophy, and oratory in the fifth century BC.

[90] Chaniotis 1997: 154. [91] Chaniotis 1997: 167.

> made in the treatment of homicide, into another sphere. A traditional ritual act, washing the hands before entering the sanctuary, continued to exist, but in a different intellectual environment. The fact that the cleaning of the body was placed in a new context and was associated with a new idea led to a semantic shift. The traditional ritual now demonstrated the acceptance of norms. Finally, once the idea emerged that just and pure thoughts are required for a successful communication with the gods, this idea was perceived as implicit criticism of the observance of ritual purity, and the requirement of the purity of the mind became part of the identity of cults and indirectly part of the competition among them. Intertextuality in the sacred regulations is the result of ritual transfer and competition.[92]

Chaniotis is the only scholar who has attempted to systematically trace and discuss the idea of inner purity in Greek religion. His discussions of the inner purity represent a watershed moment in the study of miasma, and a fundamental shift towards a novel concept of ancient Greek purity belief.

Shorter recent studies of ancient Greek purity mainly focus on Parker's work and attempt to offer some correctives. Andreas Bendlin's 2007 essay is a general introductory overview of pollution beliefs. Bendlin does not view the state of purity as being the opposite to that of pollution, but argues instead that it is normalcy which is the opposite to both pollution and purity.[93] He soon runs into a problem, however, since he also posits that 'purity is associated with the sacred realm, whereas pollution occurs in the social world beyond its boundaries'.[94] By drawing a strict distinction between normalcy on the one side, and the sacred realm and requests for purity on the other, he fails to acknowledge the existence of Parker's 'metaphysical pollution' which can be a consequence of disrespectful behaviour towards the divine in the sanctuaries, as well as of the disregard for divinely sanctioned social norms beyond their boundaries. A failure to bury a deceased parent, to borrow Parker's example of the corpse, would result in divine *agos*, even if one abstained from visiting a sanctuary. In other words: an attempt to strictly discriminate between the sacred and the social worlds disregards the fact that, for ancient Greeks, the gods were the supreme guarantors of the social order and of individual social norms, as much as of the sacred. Towards the end of his essay, following Chaniotis, Bendlin acknowledges the importance of the moral dimension of pollution belief. He sees the later fifth and the fourth centuries as the period when the concern about pollution is linked to the mental, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of bodily purity and concludes: 'The mental and the ethical dimensions of purity and pollution coexist with their ritual relevance as religious categories; they represent different yet non-exclusive Greek interpretative models.'[95]

[92] Chaniotis 2012: 135–6.
[93] Bendlin 2007: 178.
[94] Bendlin 2007: 180.
[95] Bendlin 2007: 189.

In his monograph *The History Written on the Classical Greek Body*, Robin Osborne dedicates a chapter to pollution.[96] Informed by Valeri, Osborne critiques the approach of Douglas and Parker representing them as being purely taxonomic and static,[97] and draws attention to the social and dynamic aspects of miasma. Osborne, who allows for the possibility that the pollution beliefs 'have entered the Greek world at a particular historic moment in the seventh century BC', is able to demonstrate that purity beliefs were not consistent in ancient Greece but were subject to change.[98] However, in the footsteps of Douglas (and Parker), Osborne interprets purity beliefs as instruments of social control, operating alongside shame and the law. Whereas the law requires policing and shame operates by internalizing the voices of others, pollution 'externalises that other, putting in their place the gods'.[99] 'Declaring that a form of behaviour was impious, impure and demanded purification served to bring the offender into the public gaze and justify treating him or her as needing to be separated from and then reintegrated into society.'[100] According to Osborne, pollution treats invisible conditions as if they were written on the body and need to be washed off. Pollution steps in where the law is ineffective and where the community is not close-knit enough for shame alone to regulate behaviour. Whereas shame operates by internalizing the voice of the community and has no sanctions, pollution internalizes the voices of the gods and offers a means of resolution and closure in the form of purification. Effectively, Osborne establishes a taxonomic order all over again when he claims: 'Pollution acknowledges the subordinate position of men to gods and puts the gods at the centre of the social order.'[101] While Osborne is not primarily interested in inner purity, he does seem to fleetingly acknowledge the moral aspect of purity when he couples it with shame, to the extent of arguing that purity is even able to replace shame as a measure of social control.

The latest attempt to tackle the issue of inner purity is Noel Robertson's overview article concerning the purity doctrine in the Greek sacred regulations.[102] Robertson employs 'purity of mind' as an umbrella category to encompass the purity of *phrenes*, soul, heart, and more. Such 'purity of mind' is taken to be synonymous with 'morality', which Robertson does not qualify further and which he maps onto an evolutionary grid: it was introduced into the purity doctrine, and 'not … without a certain awkwardness'.[103] The point at which inner purity ('morality') enters the general doctrine of purity might, in his view, have been the end of the fifth century BC:[104] He identifies an appro-

[96] Osborne 2011: 158–84.

[97] As we highlighted earlier, Douglas' theory of pollution actually does allow for dynamism, see 'Methodological Outline' in this chapter (pp. 11–15).

[98] Osborne 2011: 170. [99] Osborne 2011: 178. [100] Osborne 2011: 176.

[101] Osborne 2011: 183. [102] Robertson 2013.

[103] Robertson 2013: 229–30 (quotation at 230).

[104] He speculates that Ar. *Ra.* 355, which we discuss later (Ch. 11), might represent 'morality … smuggled in for a comic purpose' p. 230.

priation of 'morality' for comic purposes in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, where the request of the initiated to have a 'pure thought' (*gnome*) was meant to be comical, but might have also alluded to a now lost verse-inscription from the Athenian Eleusinion. Robertson identifies the aforementioned Epidaurian inscription (which he also dates to the fourth century BC) as the earliest secure attestation of 'purity of mind' and, following in Parker's footsteps, he describes the couplet on 'thinking *hosia*' as 'a new departure that sounded just like old custom'.[105] He posits furthermore that, 'when morality appears at last in our rules of purity, it is expressed by verse epigrams', thus neglecting to take into account prose inscriptions which refer to the same type of requests.[106] In Robertson's view, inner purity in inscriptional evidence tends to be associated with healing divinities, and in particular with Asclepius.[107] While he notes in passing some of the dissenting evidence of other cults—of which there remains a fair amount—he confines his concept of inner purity to a general notion of morality and a 'rule of conscience,' with only tangential (at times, in his parlance, 'haphazard') relations to ideas of righteousness and morality.[108]

During the past two decades, scholars such as Chaniotis, Bendlin, and Robertson have paved the way towards a better understanding of the role of inner purity in Greek religion. Nevertheless, most scholars still attempt to trace the emergence and subsequent development of the moral aspect of Greek purity beliefs. However, if we pay attention to the first attestation of the request for inner purity which appears already in Hesiod, then we must note that this request is precisely as early as a request for purity of the body. In other words: we postulate that the idea of inner purity did not develop gradually as a progressive movement, that it is not a testimony of the change in Greek mentality or an attempt to moralize the purity beliefs, previously as ruthlessly indifferent to motive as a typhoid germ, but that it was an element of the purity system which is as old as our earliest attestations of the system itself.

WHAT IS RITUAL PURITY? A CONCISE TYPOLOGY OF RITUAL PURITY IN GREEK RELIGION

That gods love the pure and have a distaste for the impure is an idea which is widely spread throughout the Mediterranean basin, the Near and Far East,

[105] Robertson 2013: 231.

[106] Robertson 2013: 230 and cf. also on 232: 'purity of mind is seldom mentioned, but always in verse.' For requests in prose, however, see: *LSS* 91.1–5 and *LSS* 59.13–14.

[107] On the influence of the Asclepieia, see also Chaniotis 2012, and our summary in 'History of Scholarship' in this chapter (p. 22).

[108] Robertson 2013: 230–2.

Central Africa, and beyond.[109] Yet, when applied to the ancient Mediterranean, the categories of purity and impurity are especially prominent in the context of cultic interaction, rather than general 'theology'.[110] The notion of worshippers' purity as a prerequisite for ritual interaction with the divine, of their striving *by means of purity* to obtain greater proximity to the gods and thus to secure their firmer support, forms the very core of ritual communication throughout the cultures in this region. Inscribed at the doors of Egyptian temples one can find statements which closely resemble inscriptions from Greek sanctuaries: 'Everything that enters the temple should be pure, pure', state many such texts,[111] and an inscription from a third-century BC Megalopolitan cult of Sarapis, Isis, and Anubis, for which a dozen parallels could be found, requests that 'whoever wishes to sacrifice must enter the sanctuary pure'.[112]

Such parallels in religious mentality between the Egyptian, Greek, and Jewish purity requests were already recognized in antiquity. Ancient writers are concerned not only with concepts of purity relating to their own religions, but are also keen to comment on and evaluate the practices of other nations and cultures. When the well-travelled Herodotus assumes the role of an anthropologist of religion and draws parallels between Greeks and Egyptians, he observes that while the Greeks are generally very concerned with ritual purity, they are far surpassed in this by the Egyptians. For Herodotus, the Egyptians are the most god-fearing of all people, and the nation most obsessed with purity: the Egyptians are, in his words, 'religious beyond measure'; he catalogues their purity practices, and remarks in admiration that 'their religious observances (*threskeiai*) are innumerable'.[113] But parallels do not go unmentioned: Greeks and Egyptians, Herodotus remarks, are the only nations who made it a matter of ritual practice 'not to have intercourse with women in temples, nor enter a temple after such intercourse

[109] The scholarship is vast and we direct the reader only to a narrow selection of the most recent contributions. Douglas 1969 remains the departure point; see our overview in 'Methodological Outline' in this chapter (pp. 11–13). A very good and concise overview of the concept of purity in Buddhism, Hinduism, and in religions of South Asia more generally, with further literature provided, is Bernard and Spencer 2010: 556–9. An excellent overview of ancient Mediterranean attitudes towards purity is now provided in Frevel and Nihan's 2013 edited collection. For Greek material, Parker 1983 is unsurpassed; Vöhler and Seidensticker's 2007 edited volume provides valuable updates on the scholarship on catharsis in particular. Material relating to Judaism is the subject of the detailed investigations of Maccoby 1999 (Second Temple in general) and Werrett 2007 (Dead Sea Scrolls in particular); on impurity and sin in particular, Klawans 2000; on pollution in Roman religion, Lennon 2014: esp. 55–166.

[110] Frevel and Nihan 2013: 14–16 rightly caution against use of the term 'religious purity', because 'there is no *concept* of religion in the self-understanding of the ancient cultures'. We can, however, speak of 'ritual purity', for it is, at least in the context of some Greek cults, a reasonably well-defined category with a clear set of parameters.

[111] Quack 2013: 122. [112] *SEG* XXVIII 421 = *NGSL* 7.3–5.

[113] Cf. Hdt. 2.37, with an illuminating discussion of the Egyptian material in Meyer 1999.

without washing'.[114] In contrast, the Babylonians, whose women spend time in the temple of Mylitta, the Assyrian version of Aphrodite, and, as Herodotus is convinced, practice sacred prostitution there, have 'the foulest of customs'.[115] Concerns for purity provide Herodotus, as they do for modern men, with a cultural matrix for the assessment of ethnic and social convergences and divergences, a grid against which individuals, groups, communities, and nations are measured and subsequently mapped onto an abstract bar chart of religious identities: filthy Babylonians, obsessively clean Egyptians, reasonably pure Greeks.

For the Greeks, purity represented a distinctly religious category. The state of purity was perceived as the opposite of pollution, and as different from the profane.[116] Above all, purity mattered in the context of religious rituals, since it was perceived as an elementary prerequisite for successful communication with the divine. Consequently, purity pertained to humans, sacred spaces, the objects therein, and sacred time. In order to enter the sacred space or perform a religious ritual, individuals needed to eradicate pollution and obtain ritual purity, which was completed by the physical (yet largely symbolic) removal of pollutants or by gaining a temporal distance from polluting matters or actions. The physical acts of removing pollutants could have included a wide variety of procedures, from washing with water (from sprinkling to total immersion), to fumigation, the use of fire or blood, and more.[117]

The Greek term for religious pollution is *miasma*, commonly translated as 'stain' or 'defilement'; a person affected by such pollution is labelled with a cognate adjective *miaros* ('stained', 'defiled', 'polluted'). The noun *miasma* is never used to denote physical dirt, but rather signifies ritual impurity that can be dangerous and contaminating.[118] Miasma is understood as dangerous because it compromises human communication with the divine and renders rituals ineffective or, in the worst case, downright sacrilegious. Some types of miasma contaminate through contact. Death, for instance, pollutes a whole house and its inhabitants, and purification and exclusion from the shrine for a fixed period of days is necessary for everyone affected. Even a visitor to the house who is not a member of the household may be rendered polluted for a certain number of days.[119]

[114] Hdt. 2.64.1. [115] Hdt. 1.199. Translations are from Godley, slightly modified.

[116] On the temporality of acquired purity, and 'normality' in opposition to purity/pollution, Bendlin 2007: 178–9. For a clear formulation of the three states as profane, polluted, and sacred (instead of pure), *LSS* 115, A 9–10 (fourth century BC, Cyrene). Cf. Parker 1983: 11.

[117] Parker 1983, *passim* and on significance of water drawn from a flowing source, 226–7 with ancient testimonies; on washing esp. Graf 2007 and 2011.

[118] For other terms denoting ritual impurity, see the Glossary, s.v. *anagnos*; *miaros*, and the *Index nominum et rerum*.

[119] Fundamental studies: Parker 1983: *passim* and esp. 52–6; Chaniotis 1997; Lupu 2009: 1–21; Osborne 2011; Chaniotis 2012; Robertson 2013: 195–244 (with further up-to-date literature); Günther 2013: 245–60.

The main sources of miasma are specific substances and specific kinds of actions. Miasma can have its origin in physical sources, and in particular in bodily flows, such as blood (including menstrual blood); in liminal events, such as death and birth; and in acts, such as sex. Essentially, every physical matter, event, or action which is a distinct characteristic of being human is perceived as polluting in the context of sacred space: the Greek notion of purity is conceptualized with divine nature in mind; when it comes to ritual pollution, it is humans who generate it by being human.[120] Greek gods do not die; they do not bleed; their birth is temporally far removed from the here-and-now of ritual action.[121] When divine sexual intercourse is represented as resembling human, even the Greek gods wash afterwards. The Greeks encountered the gods on their own terms, and they attempted to resemble the gods during the performance of religious rituals. For that reason, sacred space was kept pure of the stains of humanity, which is why birth, sex, and death were disallowed in sacred precincts. In order to gain access to the divine, humans had to establish a demarcation between the sacred and the profane by means of temporal distance and ritual washing. When Greeks were to meet their divinities, effort was made to dehumanize their bodies and to assimilate them to projections of divine bodies. This is why we encounter in Greek purity regulations stipulations concerning blood, birth, death, breast-feeding, sex, and so forth. In the divine precinct, being human, or more precisely, the hallmarks of human ephemerality, represents 'a matter out of place'. To adopt Mary Douglas' systemic and symbolic theory of purity, Greek beliefs about miasma reveal the existence of a system, which is construed from the divine perspective. Purity represents a divinely focalized category, a category articulated in line with the Greeks' thoughts about the natures and expectations of their divinities: in a nutshell, when relating to worshippers, purity represents a divinely sanctioned permission to engage.

Sacred space, similarly, had to be kept pure and inviolate. Its boundaries were carefully monitored, and every effort was made to regulate access.

[120] Parker 1983: 66 goes some way towards this attitude when he remarks: 'It certainly comes to seem, however, as if the real barrier that pollution sets up is not between man and man but between men and gods. By banning birth, death, and also sexuality from sacred places, the Greeks emphasize the gulf that separates the nature of god and man. On one level, of course, the gods have much in common with man in these respects: they underwent birth, and engage in sexual activity. But whereas for men birth and sex are part of the cycle that ends in the grave, the gods enjoy the benefits of the flesh but not its ills. . . . Excluded from a temple because of the birth of a son, a Greek is reminded, perhaps, that his son has been born to replace himself, and die in his turn, while the gods persist in splendid immortality.'

[121] There are, of course, particular exceptions for all general rules in Greek religion. With regard to gods' bleeding, *Il.* 5.340–2 notes that divine blood is *ichor* and is not like human blood in essence, since the divinities do not eat and drink human food, and therefore they are *anaimones*, 'bloodless', and immortal. The *scholia* ad v., as well as the anecdotal traditions, confirm that the divine 'blood' was conceptualized as a kind of fluid different from mortal blood. Famous is the quip of Alexander the Great, who, upon being wounded in battle, exclaimed, 'friends, this here is flowing blood, not ichor "which flows in the blessed gods"', quoting *Il.* 5. 340. (Plu. *De Alex.* 341b; *Alex.* 28.3; *regnum et imp. apophth.*, 180e).

Humans entered it in a state of ritual purity, and offerings were purified as well.[122] Such space was distinct from profane space, and was conceptualized as separate and sharply demarcated from its surroundings. The term Greeks employed for a precinct, *temenos*, reveals this distinction, as its literal meaning is 'that what is cut-out' or 'separated'. Like divine bodies, the sacred enclosures had to remain untainted by humanity and decay. Effectively, the *temenos* represented an extension of the divine body.

The oldest evidence concerning rules of access to a *temenos* reveals efforts to regulate which groups or classes of people were allowed entry. Before the Hellenistic period, when we find elaborate and detailed cathartic ('purity') regulations listing sources of pollution and means of purification, early texts placed at the gates of sanctuaries could simply state: 'No access to foreigners', or 'no women'.[123] In this way, Greek purity regulations also functioned as a system of social control.[124] Social control pertains not only to exclusion, but also to inclusion: During festivals, for instance, the citizens formed a procession in order to enter the *temenos*, thus displaying their own internal ordering. At every step, sacred regulations reveal efforts to impose order in sanctuaries, to secure stability, and to enforce the normativity of actions conducted in ritual space.

METAPHYSICAL POLLUTIONS

At the level of the individual, some purity regulations were also concerned with clothes, shoes, jewellery, and adornments, as well as with objects which one was prohibited from bringing into a sanctuary.[125] Parker uses the term 'metaphysical' pollution also for infringements against such regulations, since, unlike blood, wearing the wrong type of clothing, headgear, or shoes is

[122] On regulations concerning sacred space, Lupu 2009: 14–40.

[123] Three examples can illustrate this point (for a full discussion, see Petrovic and Petrovic 2016): *LSCG* 109, an entry regulation inscribed on a *horos*, fifth century BC, Paros, cult of Zeus Hypatos, banning women and the uninitiated from the precinct; *LSCG* 110, a fragmentary entry regulation, or a regulation concerning participation in the cult of Demeter and Kore, inscribed on a column, second half of the fifth century BC, Paros, determining that Dorians are not allowed into the precinct and may not participate in a festival of Damoia; *LSS* 49, Delos, fifth century BC, cult of Archegetes: an entry regulation inscribed on a door lintel which stood on the doors either to the *escharon* or the *abaton*, according to Sokolowski (*ad loc.*), which states 'It is not pious for a foreigner to enter', and cf. *SEG* XLIV 678 reporting that Patricia Butz (*BCH* 118, 1994: 69–98) republished a copy of the same inscription (fourth century BC?) coming possibly from the wall of Triarius, and argued that the regulation aimed at excluding non-Delians.

[124] For a recent elaboration of this idea in the Greek context, see Osborne 2011: esp. 178–84; this function of the purity doctrine was already highlighted by Douglas 1969, ch. 7 ('Primitive Worlds').

[125] On clothing, cf. *SEG* XXXIV 1685. For an overview of older literature, Brugnone 2005: 663–74, on female dress and jewellery, and Lupu 2009: 14–18, on other items more generally.

not corporeal pollution, but rather represents an offence against prescribed ritual norms.[126]

Building on this differentiation between physical and metaphysical sources of pollution, we can distinguish two main types of metaphysical pollutions according to their intensity: minor offences and major transgressions. These are both metaphysical, because it is not due to the contact with particular, corporeal matter that the pollution ensues; instead, specific actions which violate ritual or social norms are perceived as polluting. If an action violates the formal norms of a particular ritual context, it constitutes a minor offence: bringing weapons to a sanctuary, even though a sacred regulation prohibits this, for instance, will result in a metaphysical pollution that can be relatively simply remedied. A transgression of this kind derives from a mistake made in the ritual context, committed in the ritual space, during ritual time. This kind of pollution does not contaminate other humans, but it does affect the ritual space. Some sacred regulations specify that the sanctuary has to be purified in consequence of transgressions such as bringing the wrong sacrifice, breaking the rules governing clothing, or allowing or carrying banned items into the sanctuary.[127]

On the other hand, if an action violates general, divinely sanctioned social norms, it triggers a major metaphysical pollution that the Greeks termed *agos*. Generally, *agos* denotes the 'attention of the divine', which can be both positive and negative, but it is most commonly used of divine anger, the weight of divine burden placed on an individual in consequence of a transgression. The perpetrator of a major transgression becomes *enage*s, in a state of being in *agos*.[128] Parker discusses the etymology of the term and aligns with those scholars who connect *agos* with *hagnos* ('sacred'), and argues in favour of the meaning of *enages* as being 'subjected to a perilous consecration'.[129] The testimonies concerning the contagiousness of such 'perilous consecration' are not entirely consistent: A common view is that an individual who is *enages* is not contagious to others, but is shunned by the society for fear of divine retribution collaterally affecting those in his or her company.[130] The social standing of the individual who is *enages* matters greatly for the extent of the divine retribution, however: in literary portrayals, divine anger tends to strike more indiscriminately when a king, military leader, high official, or priest has incurred *agos*. In such cases, whole communities fear divine retribution.[131] Furthermore, in some texts the punishment of an entire community

[126] Parker 1983: 145; some scholars, such as Osborne 2011: 171–3, label this type of pollution 'metaphorical'. We adopt Parker's term, since the pollution triggered by such transgressions represents real ritual pollution even if its source is not polluting on its own.

[127] For attestations, Parker 1983: 145 with n. 6.

[128] Parker 1983: 5–11, 191–200. [129] Parker 1983: 6–8. [130] Parker 1983: 9.

[131] Evidence from historical reality squares with the literary portrayals: the reaction to Alcibiades' mutilation of the herms is a good example which illustrates the anxiety of the Athenians about the consequences of a military leader's impiety. See Parker 1983: 168–70 and Gagné 2009 with bibliography.

Table 0.1. Physical and metaphysical pollution

Type of pollution	Terms	Source of pollution	Setting of pollution	Agency of pollution	Duration	Resolution
1. Physical pollution	*miasma*	Polluting matter, often corporeal (bodily flows, corpses, sex)	Profane: outside a ritual context	Contagious	Temporary	(Symbolic) removal of pollutants/Temporary abstinence
2a. Metaphysical pollution (minor)	*miasma*	Polluting action: formal violation of ritual norms (wrong clothes; presence of banned, but not per se polluting, items, etc.)	Sacred: committed in the ritual space, during ritual time	Unclear: the few extant regulations regarding the ritual transgressions specify that it is the sanctuary itself that has to be purified; contact-contagion with humans is not attested	Temporary	Purification of the space/Offering to the offended divinities
2b. Metaphysical pollution (major)	*agos*	Polluting action: Fundamental transgression against a ritual or divine authority (oath-breaking; violent removal of suppliants; violation of the sanctuary, etc.)	Sacred and profane: transgression against a ritual; breach of divinely sanctioned social norms	Not always directly contagious, but always a cause of religious anxiety for the community at large.	Until resolved by the divinity	Indeterminable

for a transgression by one of its members is not represented as collateral and incidental, but as purposeful and intended. Such a case is pictured in one of the most popular passages of Hesiod's *Works and Days*, featuring Zeus who inflicts *loimos*, a complex and all-encompassing pollution, on the whole city because of one bad (*kakos*) man.[132]

The main distinction between the minor and the major transgressions needs to be drawn on the basis of ritual context. Major transgressions are typically not ritual mistakes, but rather transgressions *against* the ritual or, more generally, against the divine. Some rules governing social conduct were perceived as divinely sanctioned, such as that one must respect parents or not harm a guest. The failure to observe such rules does not represent a direct assault on the divine, but it does demonstrate a disregard for the divine authority vested in social norms and so provokes divine anger. A few examples can further clarify this point. The most common type of *agos* is associated with the breaking of an oath: an oath can be broken in any context, but the act is essentially a transgression against the ritual of oath-swearing. The failure to bury a corpse also provokes *agos*, because it represents the denial of a divinely sanctioned ritual. Such transgressions can also occur in the sanctuary: for example, the actions of dragging suppliants from the altar or killing within the sanctuary. Offences of this kind provoke divine anger and carry pollution because they violate the fundamental sanctity of ritual or ritual space and directly defy divine authority, rather than because they merely infringe on the formal rules of ritual conduct.

We summarize the main differences between physical and metaphysical pollution in Table 0.1.

LANGUAGE OF PURITY

Just as they distinguished between various types of pollution, the Greeks also developed a vocabulary to denote different states of purity and purifying actions.

States: Greek employs several terms to denote the state of purity. The two most important adjectives denoting the purity of worshippers are *katharos* and *hagnos*. Whereas *katharos* is a general adjective meaning 'pure, unmixed', which can be applied in almost any context,[133] *hagnos* is exclusively used to denote the ritual purity of the worshipper, ritual objects, sacred space, and sacred time. The adjective *hagnos* means 'uncontaminated; fit to approach

[132] Hes. *Op*. 238–47. See also Ch. 1 (p. 45).
[133] Cf. LSJ s.v. The etymology remains difficult: see Neumann 1992 and Peters 1993.

the gods'.[134] The noun *hagneia*, of the same root, denotes 'purity' or 'chastity', and like the adjective, when applied to humans it is 'essentially negative, freedom from this or that pollution'.[135] In this sense, *hagneia* can also mean 'abstinence'.

A broader term is the adjective *hosios*, which can be rendered as 'religiously correct'.[136] *Hosios* and its substantive *hosiotes* ('religious correctness') encompass everything that is sanctioned by divine authority. This, however, does not always amount to the exact meaning of the English 'sacred' or 'holy': the meaning of both the Greek adjective and the noun is always dependent on the context, and when applied to humans can mean anything from 'pious' to 'ritually pure' and 'fit to approach the gods'.[137]

Actions: the action of purification is also denoted with several verbs, the most common being *kathairein* ('cleanse', related to the adjective *katharos*) and *hagnizein* ('purify', related to the adjective *hagnos*) and their compounds. Like their respective nouns, *kathairein* is more general and pertains to any act of cleansing, whereas *hagnizein* is more specialized and is regularly associated with religious purifications. *Perirrhainein* ('besprinkle') is often used of preliminary washing before entering a sacred space;[138] *nizein* ('wash', often relating to the hands or feet) pertains to the washing of body parts; *louesthai* ('wash, bathe'), with its related compounds, is often associated with partial or complete immersion.[139]

WHAT IS INNER PURITY?

With this typology and distinctions in mind, we can now turn to our definition of inner purity. When Robert Parker quipped that '"sacred laws" posted outside sanctuaries told worshippers what to do, not what to think',[140] he was only partially correct. While the vast majority of Greek cathartic regulations[141] and other prescriptive texts dealing with cult activities are clearly

[134] Parker 1983: 148, and 147–52, *passim*. [135] Parker 1983: 149.

[136] The meaning and the etymology of the term have been objects of lively scholarly discussion; Peels 2014 offers a thorough semantic discussion with bibliography and concludes that '*ὅσιος* is what humans do to please the gods and gives them the *τιμή* they deserve, or anything of which the speaker can convince others that it belongs to that category' (p. 245). We adopt Mikalson's 2010: 11–12; 140–54 interpretation and translation of the term. (Peels does not refer to Mikalson 2010 in her discussion.)

[137] When coupled with the adjective *hieros*, however, the noun and the adjective *hosios* can also mean 'profane' in the sense of 'not forbidden by divine law'. See Mikalson 2010: 11 with n. 39.

[138] But see Lupu 2009: 371, on his no. 27, A 12–13.

[139] On washing, Graf 2007: 101–17 and Graf 2011: 101–18. [140] Parker 2011: 33.

[141] On Greek cathartic norms, see 'Continuities: Early Concepts of Inner Purity and Pollution and Greek Sacred Regulations' in the Conclusion chapter (pp. 280–8).

concerned with the *dromena*, with ritual activities in the strict sense, we do find a number of texts clearly laying down expectations on the Greek worshipper in terms of his internal disposition. Hellenistic and later cathartic regulations set up at the entries of Greek sanctuaries, granting access to those who in every respect 'think religiously correct thoughts', 'have a pure mind', 'have a pure *psyche*', or 'exercise justice in their *psyche*', or texts asserting that gods always assist those who 'in every respect think religiously correct thoughts in their mind',[142] represent a reflex of a long tradition of the concept of inner purity which was expected of a Greek worshipper already, we claim, by Hesiod's day, when we find the purity of the body going hand in hand with inner purity.

The correct inner disposition, we submit, represented an important component of ritual purity, and a prerequisite for successful communication with divinities. Such a disposition constituted a requirement for encountering the divine which was complementary to and simultaneous with the physical removal of pollutants and preparatory washings. These concepts are found in the Archaic and Classical periods in a variety of intellectual settings, from the narrow circles of the philosophical elite to the broader circle of aristocratic symposiasts, and to the grand audiences of Athenian dramatists.

Admittedly, the discourses on inner purity and pollution lack uniformity, but so too do those on outer purity and pollution. Some of the texts we discuss mention inner purity as a necessary prerequisite for ritual performance; others warn of the dangers of not having the correct mental disposition towards the divine. We can identify in the Greek evidence notions of this inner purity, the purity of *mind*, *thoughts*, *soul*, as well as its opposite—inner pollution, the pollution of the mind, thoughts, and soul.

We have outlined the metaphysical pollution that ensues as a consequence of actions, be it the formal ritual mistakes, or the grave transgressions against a ritual resulting in divine *agos*. A further, third type of metaphysical pollution that we identify in the Greek evidence pertains to pollution resulting from a *transgressive inner disposition or attitude* in the context of ritual action, or towards rituals or divinely sanctioned social norms in general. If miasma is a consequence of *contact* with polluting physical *matter*, and if *sacrilegious actions* can lead to minor or major metaphys-

[142] See 'Continuities: Early Concepts of Inner Purity and Pollution and Greek Sacred Regulations' in the Conclusion chapter (pp. 280–8). 'Think religiously correct thoughts', *phronein hosia*: *LSS* 82 (first century BC); 'pure mind': *LSS* 108.6–7 (first century BC/AD). 'Pure *psyche*': *LSS* 59.13–14: [χερ]σὶν καὶ ψυχῇ καθα[ρᾷ (second century BC, or possibly earlier). 'Exercise justice in their *psyche*', *SEG* XLIII 710 = *SGO* 01/17/01; 'gods always assist those who think religiously correct thoughts': *IG* XI,4 1299 (ll. 4–5 of the hymn), ἐσθλοῖσιν δὲ σαώτορες αἰὲν ἔπεσθε / ἀνδράσιν οἳ κατὰ πάντα νόῳ ὅσια φρονέουσιν. Cf. also *LSCG* 55.11–12: εὐείλατος γένοιτο ὁ θεὸς τοῖς θεραπεύουσιν ἁπλῆ τῇ ψυχῇ ('may the god be very merciful to those who perform rituals with a simple soul'), sanctuary of Men Tyrannos; *LSCG* 139.3–5, cult of (in all likelihood) Sarapis, requiring 'first and foremost' that worshippers enter with 'pure hands and thoughts', πρῶτον μὲν καὶ τὸ μέγιστον· χεῖρας καὶ γνώμην καθαρούς.

ical pollution, then metaphysical pollution resulting from a *transgressive inner disposition* is that which is furthest removed from the presumed original tactility of pollution.

This inner impurity of a worshipper does not result from contagious matter or incorrect actions, but from mistakes and transgressions of the self, intended or committed against the ritual norms and divinely sanctioned social rules. Such mistakes and transgressions of the self can, however, be externalized: in certain cases inner transgression can be followed by sacrilegious action, and can result in the metaphysical pollution of the second type, *agos*. In this case, the two can be so closely intertwined, that insistence on a strict delineation between the two would be misguided—as will become clear especially in our chapters dedicated to tragedy, the lines between intention and execution, the potential and realization of inner pollution can be next to invisible. In other cases, metaphysical pollution *precedes* the sacrilegious action: individuals are rendered inwardly impure already through existence of sacrilegious thoughts and intentions. In Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, for instance, the Aegyptids' wrongful inner disposition, their decision not to respect the rules of supplication and to enforce their marriage with the daughters of Danaus, is referred to as *dysagnoi phrenes* even before they act on their decision.[143] In Euripides' *Hippolytus*, Phaedra's illicit passion for her stepson is described as a 'miasma of the mind' even before she acts on it, and even though sexual intercourse never occurs.[144] Inappropriate thinking about a ritual, the power of gods, and about the divinely sanctioned social norms can generate a metaphysical pollution that we may label *inner pollution*, even in those cases when an action resulting from the inner disposition is absent. In the Greek context, inner impurity does not necessarily result from transgressive acts *alone*; the existence of an inner impulse (whether thought, attitude, or disposition) to commit an immoral act (concerning both ritual norms, and divinely sanctioned social norms) can be sufficient to trigger inner pollution.

As we have outlined what it is that we understand under 'inner pollution', we now offer a definition of inner purity:

> In the Greek religious context, inner purity is the reflective propositional attitude of the worshipper rooted in the worshipper's acknowledgement of normative expectations that govern religious behaviour, expectations which are based on the admittance of specific ethical, moral, and theological postulates and assumptions, and resulting in the submission of the self to the scrutiny of a projected divine authority.

To clarify: when we say that inner purity is a 'reflective propositional attitude', we posit that inner purity cannot be obtained without an individual's

[143] See 'Suppliants' in Ch. 8 (pp. 165–74).
[144] See 'Hippolytus' in Ch. 10 (pp. 202–3).

conscious and intentional assessment of what constitutes such an attitude, what endangers it, and what measures can be undertaken to obtain it. Essentially, inner purity is a consequence of a reflection on the delineation between what constitutes an inwardly pure disposition or attitude and what signifies an inward pollutant, a threat to a pure disposition or attitude.

Inner purity is distinct from corporeal purity in that it cannot be externally assessed, or, in the case of inner pollution, sanctioned in the same way. While we know of multiple cases of worshippers being banned from sanctuaries or experiencing ritual failure due to their violations of purity regulations, inner purity can be monitored and assessed exclusively by individual worshippers themselves, through an act of personal contemplation coupled with the projection of scrutiny by an observant divine authority. Inner purity is an issue of individual self-assessment, predicated on the knowledge of the criteria of such an assessment. Nobody can be expelled from a sanctuary for being inwardly impure, but one can be expelled and sanctioned for, say, wearing the wrong clothes, weapons, or jewellery, or for performing acts of sacrilege which are perceived as polluting. If an individual does not think religiously correct thoughts, this will be known to the individual, but these thoughts will not be externally visible. Unless internal pollution manifests itself in the form of transgressive *acts*, internal miasma remains as invisible as inner purity. Consequently, inner purity is a matter of self-assessment which, from the Hellenistic period onwards, will be increasingly articulated as *synesis*/*syneidesis*: literally, 'knowledge resulting from complete observation', a term better known through its Latin pendent *conscientia*, 'conscience'. The outcome of such self-assessment, however, while invisible to others, is from the worshipper's perspective known both to himself and to his projection of divinity. In simple terms, and in the worshipper's eyes, nobody but a divinity can know for certain whether one's soul, mind, or thoughts are pure or not. The gods are ascribed the capacity to assess and determine the inner purity of worshippers, as if by means of a psychonoetic CT-scan which detects the otherwise invisible and records a positive or negative diagnosis.

Finally, when we say that inner purity is a propositional attitude rooted in the worshipper's acknowledgement of normative expectations that govern *religious behaviour*, we state that inner purity encapsulates a notion of religious correctness and an awareness of what constitutes an adequate, non-transgressive mental state or act. Hence, this attitude affects orthodoxy and orthopraxy alike.

In order to understand the role of inner purity and pollution in ritual action, we restrict our discussion to passages which explicitly deal with the inner states of ritual performers. The testimonies under investigation pertain in particular to the following central rituals of Greek religious life: curses; dedications; libations; mysteries; oaths; 'Orphic' rituals; ritualized

river-crossings; sacrifices; supplication; sympotic rituals with libations; prayer and hymning; and *xenia*.[145]

With this, we now turn to the closer examination of the subsystems in individual sections and chapters, and trace the conceptualizations of inner purity from Hesiod to the end of the fifth century BC.

[145] For references to individual rituals, see *Index nominum et rerum*.

Part I

An Epic View

1

Hesiod on Moral Badness as Impurity

Summary: Hesiod, *Works and Days*, seventh century BC. The rules for the 'Hesiodic life' (vv. 724–59) contain numerous instructions for obtaining and maintaining ritual purity. The instructions for the ritualized crossing of the river contain the first attestation of purifying the mind as a prerequisite for completing a ritual (vv. 737–41). Hesiod specifies that it is the badness (*kakotes*) which needs to be discarded before encounter with the divinity (the river). We discuss the concept of *kakotes* in Hesiod and conclude that it is located in one's *nous*. We argue that the prayer performed while looking at the river which Hesiod mentions in v. 738 represents the means of inner purification. Furthermore, the request to avoid 'finding fault with sacrifices' (vv. 755–6) can be interpreted as stressing the importance of one's state of mind during rituals.

In the second part of his poem *Works and Days*, Hesiod presents a set of rules of conduct, which a prudent man should follow in everyday life. The rules are formulated as maxims and encompass the social sphere (vv. 694–723) and correct religious conduct (vv. 724–59). The social maxims concern the best age for marriage, how to treat friends, and how to avoid slander and insults. Many of the religious instructions deal with purity, and they are concerned in particular with protecting the sun, the hearth, the roads, and bodies of water from pollution. The rules are not isolated, but rather, grouped together as a unified guide to conduct.[1] The man who follows these rules is described as 'godlike' (*θεῖος ἀνήρ*, v. 731). The 'godlike man' pays careful attention to washing his hands before performing libations;[2] eats and washes from a consecrated pot;[3] does not pollute the rivers or roads by urination;[4] avoids pollution from female members of the household;[5] does not contaminate the hearth with sexuality,[6] or the festivals by cutting his fingernails.[7]

[1] On the rules as a unified guide to conduct, Parker 1983: 291–4.
[2] Hes. *Op.* 724–6.
[3] Hes. *Op.* 748–9.
[4] Hes. *Op.* 729–30 (roads); 757–9 (rivers).
[5] Hes. *Op.* 753–5.
[6] Hes. *Op.* 733–4.
[7] Hes. *Op.* 742–3.

A 'godlike man' keeps the domains of the living and the dead and of the humans and the gods separated.

Robert Parker noted that the text implies that an individual can approach the 'godlike' condition by obeying the rules, but that it gives no indication of the actual advantages enjoyed by the godlike man; he remarked furthermore that there is no hint of any benefits as regards the afterlife of the 'godlike' man.[8] In our opinion, it is significant that Hesiod does, however, mention that one who conducts himself appropriately will be rewarded during his lifetime: A person following Hesiodic guidelines will be blessed (*eudaimon*) and prosperous (*olbios*).[9] He also mentions the disadvantages of not following the rules, and in some cases, as we shall see, predicts harsh penalties for their violation.

It has been observed that the Hesiodic maxims are the product of a long history. Even though they may have been partly shaped or influenced by external—that is to say, non-Greek—traditions, there can be little doubt that they do represent Greek religious sensitivities and concerns of the seventh century BC.[10] The precepts provide universal guidelines for life, covering mundane and sacred issues alike, and, in a way, set out a comprehensive behavioural pattern that facilitates the acquisition of the status of a 'godlike man'. Hesiod's guide to conduct is unified and is, as such, a precursor of the Pythagorean and 'Orphic' lives, strictly regulated sets of rules for everyday life derived from the respective philosophical and religious traditions.[11]

Among the Hesiodic rules, we encounter a striking reference to moral 'badness' in the context of the ritualized crossing of a river (vv. 737–41):[12]

> μηδέ ποτ᾽ ἀενάων ποταμῶν καλλίρροον ὕδωρ
> ποσσὶ περᾶν πρίν γ᾽ εὔξῃ ἰδὼν ἐς καλὰ ῥέεθρα
> χεῖρας νιψάμενος πολυηράτῳ ὕδατι λευκῷ.
> ὃς ποταμὸν διαβῇ κακότητ᾽ ἰδὲ χεῖρας ἄνιπτος, (740)
> τῷ δὲ θεοὶ νεμεσῶσι καὶ ἄλγεα δῶκαν ὀπίσσω.

[8] Parker 1983: 292. [9] Hes. *Op.* 826–9.

[10] The section of the poem containing religious norms was rejected by Wilamowitz, who influenced Solmsen 1963: 317–19 and Nicolai 1964: 140–2. These scholars saw the superstitious tone and lack of structure as out of character. For an overview of this issue, see Robertson 1969. Modern scholars, most notably West 1978: 333–4, perceive them as genuine. West 1978 pointed out that particularly the advice on social relationships has many parallels in the Near Eastern texts; Nagy 1990: 70–1 underscored the similarities between Indian tradition (esp. *The Law Code of Manu*) and Hesiod's precepts. In his general discussion of the relevance of Near Eastern parallels for our understanding of Hesiod, Rutherford 2009: 19–22 cautions against claims of direct borrowing; instead he maintains that the parallels might well represent a product of a more general cultural diffusion, or be a result of the similar political and social contexts of the texts.

[11] Nilsson 1955: 669; Parker 1983: 292; Zhmud 2012: 204. On Pythagorean and 'Orphic' lives, see Chs. 2 and 12 respectively.

[12] We quote the text after Solmsen 1970.

> Neither cross the beautifully flowing water of the ever-rolling rivers
> on foot before you have prayed, looking at the beautiful currents,
> having washed your hands with the lovely, foaming water.
> Whoever should cross the river with badness and hands unwashed,
> the gods resent him and afterwards give[13] him trouble.

This passage stresses the importance of ritual purity; it follows a series of stern warnings relating to ritual purity and the danger of pollution: do not pour libations with unwashed hands (vv. 724–6); do not urinate facing the sun (v. 727) or on the road (v. 729); do not expose yourself to the hearth (vv. 753–4); do not have sex after a funeral (v. 735).[14]

The lines quoted above also pertain to ritual practice, since the rivers are treated as divinities. Because crossing a river constitutes an encounter with the divine, the performance of appropriate rituals is required prior to entering the water: in this case, ritual washing and prayer.[15] The ritual washing of hands is also mentioned earlier in the poem, where it is requested before the performance of libations to Zeus and other gods at dawn.[16] In our passage, however, 'a bold zeugma'[17] connects hand-washing with the cleansing of 'badness' (*κακότης*). Robert Parker notes that in this passage moral 'badness' is included within the concept of pollution, but that it can be removed by washing.[18] Such washing of *κακότης* by the washing of hands is not attested elsewhere.

In the following discussion, we first argue that the noun *κακότης* refers to moral character in early Greek and the meaning must be the same here. Then we proceed to precisely identify the seat of moral badness, and argue

[13] In the sense that at the point of crossing the rivers, the gods have decided to give him trouble later, hence aorist (the decision is made) and *ὀπίσσω* (the decision pertains to the future): 'bring trouble upon him afterwards.'

[14] Unfortunately, no conclusions about the thematic coherence or the structural arrangement of the prohibitions can be safely reached because of the difficulties imposed by the textual tradition. See West 1978 on vv. 735–45.

[15] On rivers as divinities, see Hes. *Th.* 337–45. Cf. Aeneas' washing of hands and prayer to Tiber as a god: Vergil, *Aen.* 8.66–78.

[16] *Op.* 724–6. See also this chapter, p. 49.

[17] West 1978: 339 ad l. As far as we can see, all translators and commentators take the elided form as an accusative rather than a dative; we agree with West's statement that 'the alternative articulations *κακότητι δὲ* ("and in his wickedness"), *κακότητ' ἴδε* ("he encounters misery") make unsatisfactory expressions', but take a fundamentally different view on the nature of pollution, which he, relying on Nilsson 1955: 101–2 but ignoring Moulinier 1952: 33–6, takes as physical. See further this chapter, pp. 44–7 on *κακότης*. Also corroborating the assumption of an accusative is Hesiod's use of *ἴδέ*: used as a copula, *ἴδέ* always connects two items ennumerated in the same case: cf. *Th.* 18; 887. Fragments apear to confirm this: see Fr. 17a l. 17; 150 l. 15 (*Λίβυς* is an acc. plural); Fr. 195 l. 19; Fr. 204 l. 104 Merkelbach–West.

[18] Parker 1983: 293–4. An intimation towards such interpretation is found in Moulinier 1952: 35, who tentatively suggests that this formulation implies 'une souillure «morale»'. This 'souillure', however is qualified as 'not entirely immaterial', and the statement is followed by a series of open questions and sentences starting with 'mais'.

that it is located in the mind (*nous*). Consequently, since moral 'badness' refers here to the worshipper's mind, this passage constitutes the first secure attestation of the idea that mental purity is a prerequisite for the successful completion of the ritual. Finally, we return to the problem of 'washing off' of badness and offer a solution.

Let us first establish what Hesiod means by 'badness'. In the *Works and Days*, κακότης is conceptualized as the deeds and actions of a bad (κακός) man. For Hesiod, moral 'badness' and 'goodness' are intrinsically connected with the notion of justice, one of the main concerns and topics of the poem.[19] In one of the most famous passages (vv. 202–85), Hesiod describes justice as the basic prerequisite for a harmonious relationship between men and gods.[20] It is of special importance for our discussion that, shortly after this passage, the text portrays the disregard for justice as a source and cause of universal pollution. Hesiod vividly depicts the consequences of living justly and of neglecting these principles, starting with the former. The city will prosper if its citizens are (vv. 225–6):

> οἳ δὲ δίκας ξείνοισι καὶ ἐνδήμοισι διδοῦσιν
> ἰθείας καὶ μή τι παρεκβαίνουσι δικαίου…
>
> Those who pass just judgments to foreigners and their own people
> and do not violate justice…

A 'bad man' (κακὸς ἀνήρ) is defined as the very opposite of the just: He is 'set on bad transgression (ὕβρις… κακή) and wicked deeds (σχέτλια ἔργα)'. Hesiod portrays such men as being the object of divine scrutinizing gaze and

[19] There was a general agreement that *dike* was used in a moral sense already in Homer, as Hoffmann posited in 1914: 42. Jaeger 1939: 62–4; Adkins 1960: 35, 54 and Lloyd-Jones 1971: 35–6 argue that *dike* means 'justice' in Hesiod. However, Latte 1946: 65 was the first to argue that the term *dike* is not employed for moral evaluation in early Greek epic, and Gagarin 1973 and 1974 argued that *dike* was not a moral concept in Homer and Hesiod but that it was primarily a legal term without general moral application until at least 480 BC; in Homer it may mean 'characteristic', 'characteristic behaviour', 'settlement', or 'legal process', and in Hesiod's *Works and Days* it means 'legal process'. For a critical discussion and a persuasive disputing of Latte's and Gagarin's arguments, see Claus 1977 and Dickie 1978. Dickie 1978 discusses a wide range of passages and concludes that *dike* does have moral overtones in the early epic and should be understood as 'custom', 'judgment', 'justice', or 'righteousness'. For a discussion of the ancient and modern views and arguments in favour of conceptualizing *dike* as containing moral overtones and understanding it as 'justice' in Hesiod, see also Nagy 1990: 63–7; 1995: 64, and Canevaro 2012: 174–5. We will demonstrate in the following pages that, in Hesiod, the concept of justice does contain strong moral overtones and that it encompasses social and religious correctness. We follow Claus 1977: 76, who argues that the way that humans use *dike* towards one another in Hesiod determines what kind of *dike* they will ultimately receive from the gods, and Nagy 1990: 63–5, who argues that, in Hesiod, Zeus represents the absolute standard of justice.

[20] On the structure of the segment of the *Works and Days* which deals with *dike* (vv. 202–85), Claus 1977. On the way this segment fits into the *Works and Days*, Clay 2009.

judged by the gods and as a source of religious danger for the entire community (vv. 238–41):

> *οἷς δ' ὕβρις τε μέμηλε κακὴ καὶ σχέτλια ἔργα,*
> *τοῖς δὲ δίκην Κρονίδης τεκμαίρεται εὐρύοπα Ζεύς.*
> *πολλάκι καὶ ξύμπασα πόλις κακοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀπηύρα,*
> *ὅστις ἀλιτραίνῃ καὶ ἀτάσθαλα μηχανάαται.*
>
> To these men set on bad transgression (*hubris*… *kake*) and wicked deeds (*schetlia erga*),
> Zeus, far-seeing son of Kronos, passes judgment (*dike*).
> And often an entire city suffers because of a bad man (*kakou andros*) whenever he would sin and contrive wickedness.

Having thus described the 'bad man' (*κακὸς ἀνήρ*), Hesiod expands on the idea that the consequences of hubristic behaviour, far from being limited to the individual perpetrator, affect his entire community and lead to universal pollution.[21] In the unsettling catalogue of punishments Zeus invokes, Hesiod lists (vv. 242–7):

> *τοῖσιν δ' οὐρανόθεν μέγ' ἐπήγαγε πῆμα Κρονίων,*
> *λιμὸν ὁμοῦ καὶ λοιμόν, ἀποφθινύθουσι δὲ λαοί·*
> *[οὐδὲ γυναῖκες τίκτουσιν, μινύθουσι δὲ οἶκοι*
> *Ζηνὸς φραδμοσύνῃσιν Ὀλυμπίου· ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε]*
> *ἢ τῶν γε στρατὸν εὐρὺν ἀπώλεσεν ἢ ὅ γε τεῖχος*
> *ἢ νέας ἐν πόντῳ Κρονίδης ἀποτείνυται αὐτῶν.*
>
> The son of Kronos brings down on them great calamity from the skies,
> famine and pestilence at the same time, and people perish.
> [Women do not give birth to children, their houses diminish
> because Olympian Zeus intended so. And again, at another time,]
> either the son of Kronos destroyed their great army or their wall,
> or sinks their ships in the sea.

In sum, then, the 'bad man' is conceptualized as one who commits 'bad hubris and wicked deeds' (v. 238, *ὕβρις*… *κακή*; *σχέτλια ἔργα*), who 'sins and

[21] See 'Metaphysical Pollutions' in the Introduction chapter (pp. 29–32). Parker 1983: 10 and 257 famously argued that 'there was, in Greek belief, no such thing as non-contagious religious danger'. At pp. 257–80 Parker discusses the collective punishment for the miasma of the individual at length and stresses that the social standing of the perpetrator mattered: beneficial as well as detrimental actions of kings and rulers have particularly strong consequences for the community at large, and are correspondingly rewarded or sanctioned by divinities (Parker 1983: 265–6). Nevertheless, in the historical period the concept extends past the elite, and testimonies demonstrate that communities were also concerned about the religiously questionable behaviour of ordinary citizens (Parker 1983: 279). This is also the case in Hesiod: the moral of the passage is taken as paradigmatic both for Perses and the kings (the addressees of the lines; cf. vv. 213 and 248).

contrives wickedness' (v. 241, *ἀλιτραίνῃ καὶ ἀτάσθαλα μηχανάαται*). We can now conclude that, for Hesiod, a 'bad man' is morally bad, and we can turn to the question of where exactly his 'badness' is located. This, too, is explained shortly after the catalogue of divine punishments quoted above. Hesiod addresses the kings (v. 248) and warns them to be just, for they are being watched by divinities (v. 250, *ἀθάνατοι φράζονται*). The gods are assisted by countless watchers (vv. 252–5) and the goddess Dike (vv. 256–62):

> *ἡ δέ τε παρθένος ἐστὶ Δίκη, Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα,*
> *κυδρή τ' αἰδοίη τε θεοῖς οἳ Ὄλυμπον ἔχουσιν,*
> *καί ῥ' ὁπότ' ἄν τίς μιν βλάπτῃ σκολιῶς ὀνοτάζων,*
> *αὐτίκα πὰρ Διὶ πατρὶ καθεζομένη Κρονίωνι*
> *γηρύετ' ἀνθρώπων ἀδίκων νόον, ὄφρ' ἀποτείσῃ* (260)
> *δῆμος ἀτασθαλίας βασιλέων οἳ λυγρὰ νοεῦντες*
> *ἄλλῃ παρκλίνωσι δίκας σκολιῶς ἐνέποντες.*
>
> And virgin Justice is there, the offspring of Zeus,
> renowned and honoured among the gods, who dwell on Olympus,
> who, whenever someone offends her with crooked speech,
> sits herself next to her father Zeus, son of Kronos, and immediately
> reports the mind (*noos*) of unjust men, so that the people pay
> for the wickedness (*atasthalia*) of their kings, who, thinking baneful thoughts,
> bend just judgments in another direction by speaking crookedly.

The mind, *νοῦς*, is identified as the seat of injustice here.[22] Justice is more than a settlement of a legal process—it is an ordinance, a law (*νόμος*) given to men by Zeus, and it is what distinguishes humans from beasts.[23] Those who observe it Zeus rewards with prosperity.[24] Finally, moral badness (*κακότης*) is again discussed in verses 286–92, that depict a diverging of two roads, one leading to badness (*κακότης*) and one to excellence (*ἀρετή*). The badness is easy to reach—the road towards it is smooth, and badness lives nearby. To excellence (*ἀρετή*) the gods have laid down a long, steep, and difficult path. These lines have been quoted twenty-six times in extant literature dating from 700 BC to AD 300 as a supreme illustration of morality.[25]

It is now evident that, for Hesiod, *κακότης* represents moral badness and the opposite to virtue, *arete*. A bad man (*κακὸς ἀνήρ*) does not follow justice (*δίκη*) with his mind, and acts immorally; he represents a source of religious

[22] Cf. *Op.* 280–1, where 'what is just' (*τὰ δίκαια*) is represented as that which can be known or understood, *γιγνώσκων*. *νοῦς* is often associated with morality in Hesiod and 'functions as a seat of a person's character, disposition and moral traits', as demonstrated by Sullivan 1990: 71. Of the twenty-six attestations of the noun in Hesiod, no less than twenty are either tentatively or securely associated with morality (Sullivan 1990: 82–5, appendix 1).

[23] *Op.* 276–8. Hesiod is the originator of this striking thought, which gains popularity in the centuries to come. On justice dividing the man from the beasts, Erbse 1993: 14–15.

[24] *Op.* 281.

[25] Canevaro 2012: 16–18. For a discussion of quotations from *Th.* and *Op.* in antiquity, Koning 2010: 144 n. 74. For Plato's drawing on these lines, Koning 2010*a*: 97.

pollution and danger for his community. Just as Hesiod connects the bad man with injustice and religious danger, so he presents moral righteousness and adherence to justice (δίκη) as coexisting with ritual correctness. Gregory Nagy points out that in *Op.* 336–41, a passage which follows the lines quoted above, the moral correctness of δίκη is 'programmatically re-enforced by the ritual correctness of the just man':[26] Perses is again reminded that gods punish unjust deeds (ἄδικα ἔργα; vv. 325–34), and that he should often sacrifice purely and cleanly to the deathless gods and propitiate them often with libations and incense (vv. 336–41). Religious correctness is thus laid out as avoiding unjust deeds and as honouring the gods with sacrifices and libations.[27]

In vv. 325–34 the following deeds are listed as unjust (ἄδικα ἔργα): gaining wealth by force, stealing, or deception; wronging a suppliant or a guest; engaging in illicit sexual intercourse; offending orphans or aged parents. These offences span both the social and religious spheres. This is stressed at the end of the passage, where Hesiod states that such deeds provoke the anger of Zeus himself, who inflicts grave punishments (vv. 333–4). Effectively, Zeus holds the transgressor in *agos*.[28] To sum up, in Hesiod's poem, justice is represented as a goddess and as a law given to humans by Zeus. It governs all social and religious relationships; it encompasses religious correctness. Moral goodness equals adherence to justice, whereas 'badness' (κακία or κακότης) is equal to injustice and religious transgression.

We can now return to our passage regarding the ritualized crossing of the river, and conclude that κακότης here signifies 'badness' in a moral sense and that moral 'badness' is specifically located in the mind (νοῦς). As a result, we can say that this passage provides the first secure attestation of the idea that purity of mind represents a prerequisite for the performance of a ritual. In order for the ritual to be effective, the person crossing the river must first perform a prayer and wash his hands. The phrase '*kakotet' ide cheiras aniptos*' (v. 740) might suggest that it is through ritualized washing that worshipper's ablution from physical impurity and mental pollution, *kakotes* of his *nous*, is achieved.[29] How can this be? In our view, we need to take a close look

[26] Nagy 1995: 63. [27] See also Nagy 1990: 69–71.

[28] 333–4: τῷ δ' ἦ τοι Ζεὺς αὐτὸς ἀγαίεται, ἐς δὲ τελευτὴν / ἔργων ἀντ' ἀδίκων χαλεπὴν ἐπέθηκεν ἀμοιβήν, 'With such a man Zeus himself is indignant, and at the end, in return for unjust deeds, he inflicts a dreadful requital.' The terms *agos* and *enages* are not attested in Hesiod; instead the poet employs the verb, ἀγαίομαι, 'to hold in contempt'. Whether or not the verb is an etymological cognate of *agos* is unclear; cf. Frisk 1960, s.v. ἀγα-; at any rate, it denotes divine wish for retribution. Illustrative is the entry from *Etymologicum Magnum*, s.v. Ἀγαίεται which first quotes *Op*. 333, and explains it in terms of 'malign, be wroth, be angry', 'τῷ δ' ἤτοι Ζεὺς αὐτὸς ἀγαίεται. Βασκαίνει, ὀργίζεται, χολοῦται…'.

[29] This is a common interpretation of the passage from Moulinier 1952: 35–7 onwards; cf. Parker 1983: 293 and esp. 294, 'The idea of being "unwashed in badness and in hands", by contrast, is singular, and not in expression alone. On the one hand, it includes moral badness of some kind within the concept of pollution; on the other, it seems to treat such badness as *effaceable by washing*' (our italics).

at the context of the passage in which washing off of *kakotes* is implied, since the Hesiodic passage deals not with one but two preparatory rituals prescribed before river-crossing: washing (v. 739) and prayer whilst looking at the river (v. 738). Hesiod's instruction is to look at the river, wash the hands, and pray, and these actions are represented as either simultaneous or performed in quick succession (vv. 737–9).

We suggest that it is the prayer, rather than hand-washing, that puts the worshipper in the correct religious mindset, a mindset which ought to be maintained for the duration of the ritual—in our case, it pertains to the time the person spends sunk in the water that is a god. The whole passage (vv. 737–41) consists of two parts: the first part is a ritual instruction, a prescription of what one ought to do (vv. 737–9); and the second part (vv. 740–1) contains a sanction clause, a warning about the consequences of disobeying the rules laid out in verses 737–9.

Accordingly, verse 740 also contains a reference not to one but two preparatory rituals. *Kakoteta aniptos* refers to possible failure to perform the prayer outlined in verse 738; *aniptos*, 'unwashed', relating to *kakotes* is to be taken figuratively.[30] *Cheiras aniptos*, on the other hand, should be taken literally, to refer to the failure to perform the ritual washing of hands outlined in verse 739. The verb *niptein* is well attested in the context of stipulations for general (physical) purification.[31] In sum, we posit that verses 738–40 refer to the inner purification by the means of prayer rather than to 'badness' that is effaceable by washing.[32]

How can the mind (*nous*) be purified by prayer? The content of the Hesiodic *νοῦς* is, to a large extent, dynamic: it is subject to change in a moment and it can be influenced and directed by its owner.[33] What Hesiod's passage implies, therefore, is that the performer of the ritual needs to put himself in the religiously correct mental framework in order to prepare himself for such an intimate and intense, indeed *physical*, contact with the divinity.

The 'badness' expunged by prayer in Hesiod's world, then, may very well represent all 'religiously incorrect' mental processes, all those turned to injustice (*ta adika* which consist of *hubris* and *schetlia erga*, bad deeds). The state of ritual purity in general is temporary—it does not represent a complete and lasting transformation of a person, but rather a temporally brief state of mind and body. The heightened state of a worshipper's purity lasts as long as the performance of a ritual: before entering a sanctuary, worshippers were required to abstain from sources of pollution and to wash themselves

[30] See 'The Language of Inner Purity and Pollution' (pp. 268–77) and 'Seats and Qualifiers' in the Conclusion chapter (pp. 277–80).

[31] For an analysis, see Moulinier 1952: 26.

[32] For prayer as means of inner purification, see also our remarks on the Theognidea Ch. 6, pp. 118–21.

[33] Sullivan 1990: 69–70 on the change of *νοῦς* in Hesiod (with relevant literature in n. 6), and 77–80 on entities affecting and changing it.

clean; once the worshippers leave the sacred space, they are again exposed to sources of pollution.[34] This is the case with crossing the river, too: for the duration of the process, one ought to be pure in body and in mind.

The first and most obvious thought that Hesiod implies should form in the mind of the person crossing the river is the acknowledgement of the water as divinity. His instruction to pray and look at the water suggests that the person should be praying *to* the river, addressing it as a god. Following upon this, the worshipper would associate the river with the appropriate notions one ought to have about the divinity, and presumably, formulate the address to the river in accordance with these notions. Throughout the poem, Hesiod maintains that the gods are first and foremost concerned with justice that, as we have observed, in his view encompasses ritual and social correctness. Acknowledgement of a divinity, then, represents acknowledgement of justice as a supreme principle governing divine and human conduct. Acknowledgement of a divinity is also recognition that one's own thoughts and behaviour are being watched and scrutinized. For this reason, it is of paramount importance to put aside all badness, at least for the duration of direct encounter with the divine. Hand-washing, and the formation and articulation of appropriate thoughts, serve to prepare the person to encounter the god pure in body and in mind. If this is not done, there are consequences, because the gods are watching and can see into the mind of humans.[35] This is why Hesiod closes the instruction with the warning: 'the gods resent him and afterwards give him trouble' (v. 741). This type of divine anger is, in its essence, synonymous with being *enages*, subject of perilous consecration.[36]

Hesiod is generally quick to remark that the gods are pleased when the rites are performed correctly, and are displeased when proper ritual purity is not obtained. Those who neglect to wash their hands before pouring a libation will not be heard by the gods: the gods 'spit out' their prayers.[37] By contrast, when offerings are made correctly (v. 337: *ἁγνῶς καὶ καθαρῶς*, 'in a ritually pure and clean way') the gods are pleased and the worshipper prospers (vv. 340–1):

> *ὥς κέ τοι ἵλαον κραδίην καὶ θυμὸν ἔχωσιν,*
> *ὄφρ' ἄλλων ὠνῇ κλῆρον, μὴ τὸν τεὸν ἄλλος.*
>
> So that the gods have a merciful heart and mind towards you,
> and that you might buy the allotment of another man, and not he yours.

[34] On physical purification in the ritual context, see 'What Is Ritual Purity? A Concise Typology of Ritual Purity in Greek Religion' in the Introduction chapter (pp. 25–32).

[35] This thought is also expressed at *Op*. 256–62.

[36] On this see 'Metaphysical Pollutions' in the Introduction chapter (pp. 29–32), and above on vv. 333–4 and verb *ἀγαίομαι* in Hesiod, n. 28.

[37] *Op*. 724–6: 'Do not pour libations of sparkling wine to Zeus and other immortals at dawn with unwashed hands—they do not hear your prayers, but spit them back.'

We can also observe different grades of divine anger: libating with unwashed hands renders the ritual null and void, and the gods refuse to communicate with the worshipper. The failure to achieve the required state of purity results in the failure of the ritual. A graver and more serious offence is committed when someone crosses the river without prayer and the ritual washing—then the gods are not only irate, but also keen to punish. This makes sense: the rivers are divinities, and by entering them humans establish a particularly close contact with the divine. It is one of the basic premises of Greek religion that gods abhor pollution, which is why ritual cleansing is a necessary prerequisite for every ritual action.[38] This would imply that entering a river requires a particularly stringent adherence to ritual purity, while avoiding this purification inspires a particularly harsh punishment—a punishment for jeopardizing the god's own purity.[39] The intensity of the contact with the divinity corresponds directly to the intensity of the purity required for the worshipper and to the severity of the divine punishment if this requirement is violated.

Another significant passage in Hesiod's *Works and Days* additionally testifies to the idea that mental correctness is required during the performance of a ritual and that the violation of this requirement provokes divine anger (vv. 755–6):

> *…μηδ' ἱεροῖσιν ἐπ' αἰθομένοισι κυρήσας*
> *μωμεύειν ἀίδηλα· θεὸς νύ τι καὶ τὰ νεμεσσᾷ.*
>
> When you happen to attend burning sacrifices,
> do not find fault with what is consumed: the god resents this, too.

The exact meaning of the formulation *μωμεύειν ἀίδηλα* has been the subject of much scholarly debate (starting already in antiquity). It is the word *ἀίδηλα* that represents the focus of the debate, as the phrase has been taken variously to signify 'sacrifices' and 'mysteries'. In either case, it denotes a ritual.[40]

[38] On purity as means of obtaining proximity to the gods, and 'permission to engage,' see 'What Is Ritual Purity? A Concise Typology of Ritual Purity in Greek Religion' in the Introduction chapter (pp. 25–32).

[39] That pure gods can suffer defilement by sacrilegious acts of humans is part of traditional belief, even if this became an object of debates questioning such power over immortals. See Parker 1983: 144–5.

[40] Some have argued that the phrase relates to individuals 'mocking at mysteries' or the 'mocking at the things unseen'; others have argued that *ἀίδηλα* is to be taken as adverbial modification of *μωμεύειν*, and that we should understand the phrase as 'blind resentment' of the hungry onlooker spurred by the sight of good meat perishing in fire. Robertson 1969: 164–9 offers a full discussion of ancient and modern interpretations of the lines (on 'mocking of mysteries', Robertson 1969: 165), and translates: 'do not carp at what is consumed.' West 1978: 343–4 supports Robertson's understanding of the verb, but reads the adjective as adverbial modification, hence: 'carp balefully.' The reason an onlooker might carp at a sacrifice could be the amount of meat offered, be it that it is too much or too little (West 1978: 343, with ancient

While it seems to us likely that Hesiod indeed does refer to sacrifices, it is for present concerns more significant that he warns against inappropriate, disrespectful attitude towards a ritual. It is, however, not entirely clear from the text whether Hesiod is warning against the attitude or its loud expression.[41]

At any rate, disrespect towards a religious ceremony constitutes sacrilege. The Greek word ἱερός, usually translated as 'sacred', marks out all things that are in some way associated with the gods; failure to honour ἱερά, and especially acts of disrespect towards the divine, represent sacrilege and incur pollution. Robert Parker discusses a plethora of texts which testify that sacrilege—in the form of the violation of temples and sacred images, of sacred time (festivals), sacred grounds, sacred equipment, or of a priest—incurred pollution.[42] So, too, did the breach of ritual regulations by, for example, wearing the wrong clothes, bringing forbidden objects into the sanctuary, bringing the wrong kinds of sacrifice, or saying disrespectful things about the rituals. The acts are physical, but the pollution they incurred was metaphysical.[43]

Among the testimonies for the idea that mocking, ridiculing, or saying disrespectful things about a ritual incurs divine punishment are the *Iamata* from the sanctuary of Asclepius at Epidaurus.[44] *Iamata* were inscriptions set up in the sanctuary that recorded instances of Asclepius' successful, often miraculous, healing. Instructive are the stories about those who doubted Asclepius' healing powers, or even ridiculed the inscriptions detailing miracle healings. In these cases, the god would intervene and could punish the mockery, sometimes even leaving a lasting memorial of an individual's irreverent behaviour.[45]

testimonies). This criticism would be in line with Hesiod's thinking on the size of sacrifice related in *Op.* 336, where he states that everyone should sacrifice to gods in accordance with their ability ('you should sacrifice to immortal gods, as you are able (κατὰ δύναμιν)'). Hence, the size of appropriate sacrifice is, in Hesiod's view, not absolute but relative, and depends on the worshipper's financial power.

[41] The verb μωμεύω ('find fault with, blame, criticize') does not necessarily connote a loud expression of critique. Cf. LSJ, s.v. μωμάομαι.

[42] Parker 1983: 144–90.

[43] On physical versus metaphysical pollution, see 'What Is Ritual Purity? A Concise Typology of Ritual Purity in Greek Religion' in the Introduction chapter (pp. 25–32).

[44] See 'Belief and Inner Purity' in the Introduction chapter (pp. 4–8). On *Iamata*, Herzog 1931; Chaniotis 2012 with further bibliography.

[45] The testimonies are conveniently collected in Edelstein and Edelstein 1945 (repr. 1998). Herzog T 3: a man who did not believe in the inscribed testimonies and was disparaging of them was eventually cured by Asclepius, but renamed 'Apistos' ('Unbeliever') by the god (see 'Belief and Inner Purity' in the Introduction chapter [pp. 5–6]); Herzog T 4: a woman who laughed at the inscribed testimonies as incredible and impossible was cured, but had to dedicate a silver pig as a lasting memorial of her ignorance; Herzog T 36: a man who laughed at the inscribed testimonies was punished by an accident which left him crippled, but the god cured him after the man prayed to him earnestly. For discussion of these examples in the context of development of purity doctrine, see Chaniotis 2012: esp. 128–30.

In sum, Hesiod's remark about finding fault with sacrifices occurs within a discussion of pollution, but the poet does not expressly state that this act is itself ritual pollution. He does, however, identify *μωμεύειν* as an act that irritates the god. From this, we can safely conclude that Hesiod discusses mental disposition during a religious ritual, and that he singles out the offensive attitude as a cause of divine anger. Here, too, the problem relates to the need for a worshipper to possess an appropriate state of mind (*νοῦς*), which he is required to hold in check during the sacrificial ritual to ensure its integrity and ultimate success.

Part II

Inner Purity and Pollution in Pre-Platonic Philosophical Tradition

2

Pythagoras on Purity of Soul and Sacrificial Ritual

Summary: Pythagoras, *c.*570–495 BC. The transmitted *symbola* which articulate the rules of conduct for the 'Pythagorean way of life' include numerous instructions concerning the performance of religious rituals. Obtaining and preserving purity occupy a prominent place in the extant *symbola*. Diodorus Siculus testifies that Pythagoras requested that those performing sacrifices should approach the gods not only wearing pure and bright garments and having a body free of pollution (potentially incurred through 'unjust deeds' by which, we argue, illicit sexual intercourse, murder, and dietary transgressions are meant), but also with a 'ritually pure soul' (10.9.6). We discuss Pythagoras' attitudes towards the soul and propose that such state of the soul is probably acquired through a specific kind of prayer combined with periods of contemplative silence. On the basis of other *symbola* and Pythagoras' views on metempsychosis, we argue that Diodorus transmits an idea which can genuinely be attributed to Pythagoras.

In the tenth book of his *Libraries*, Diodorus Siculus attributes the need to conduct rituals with a pure soul to the philosopher Pythagoras (10.9.6):

> *ὅτι ὁ αὐτὸς Πυθαγόρας παρήγγελλε πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς προσιέναι τοὺς θύοντας μὴ πολυτελεῖς, ἀλλὰ λαμπρὰς καὶ καθαρὰς ἔχοντας ἐσθῆτας, ὁμοίως δὲ μὴ μόνον τὸ σῶμα καθαρὸν παρεχομένους πάσης ἀδίκου πράξεως, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἁγνεύουσαν.*[1]
>
> For the same Pythagoras announced that those performing sacrifices are to approach the gods wearing not expensive clothes, but bright and clean garments; similarly they should present themselves not only with a body clean of every deed of injustice, but also with a ritually pure soul (*hagneusa psyche*).

If this view is genuinely Pythagorean, then this remarkable passage contains one of the earliest attestations of the idea that, for the successful performance of rituals, worshippers should consider the purity of their souls in addition to the purity requirements regarding their attire and cleanliness. Diodorus'

[1] We quote the text after Fischer–Vogel (Teubner).

Libraries, in which this passage is transmitted, however, was composed in the first-century BC; consequently, we must question exactly how early we can anchor this idea. Is it a genuinely early Pythagorean concept? Or, given the nature of the Pythagorean corpus—which developed additively, being gradually supplemented by apophthegmatic and anecdotal traditions about the philosopher—should we instead view this passage as reflecting an idea contemporary to, or only slightly earlier than, Diodorus' work? We can offer an answer to this question through reference to Diodorus' sources. The consensus among scholars is that the entire section of doxographic passages in 10.9.1–8 stems from a biography of Pythagoras, which is based directly on the *Tripartitum*, a third-century BC collection of Pythagorean philosophy.[2] The *Tripartitum* itself goes back, at least in part, to Aristoxenus' *Pythagorean Precepts* (*Pythagorikai Apophaseis*), one of the most reliable fourth-century BC sources for Pythagoras.[3] Since Diels' seminal analysis, which led him to reconstruct the contents of the *Tripartitum*, Pythagorean scholars are in general agreement that Diodorus' source cannot be later than the third century BC.[4] Some scholars, furthermore, propose that Diodorus relied directly on Aristoxenus' work,[5] which would suggest that the concept of the purity of the soul as a prerequisite for sacrificial ritual was a fixed part of the Pythagorean corpus in the fourth century BC. Based on this, we can say that the material in the passage quoted above is, at least, a part of the fourth- or third-century BC Pythagorean corpus. Could it, however, be even earlier?

To determine this, we need to establish whether the passage fits into the general tone of Pythagoras' remarks about religious practice. Our source for

[2] The ancient title of this collection is unknown; *Tripartitum* is a scholarly designation. On the reconstruction of the *Tripartitum*, see Huffman 2008 and Schorn 2013: 226–33.

[3] On the reliability of the *Pythagorikai Apophaseis* of Aristoxenus, who was a Pythagorean in his youth: Zhmud 2012: 72 with a short summary, and Huffman 2008: 104–19 for a full and detailed analysis. While older scholarship assumed, with little or no investigation, that Aristoxenus' *Pythagorikai Apophaseis* for the most part contains passages in which Pythagorean authority was mapped onto Peripatetic and Academic ideas, the most recent detailed studies show that the work reliably preserves the core of Pythagorean ethics. Huffman 2008: 107: 'the standard view, according to which the *Pythagorean Precepts* were forged by Aristoxenus for the glory of the Pythagoreans, must be rejected and Aristoxenus' treatise should be accepted as what it purports to be, his account of the Pythagorean ethics he was taught by Xenophilus and others around 360–350 B.C.'

[4] See Schorn 2013: 226–33. Schorn discusses the doxographic passages in detail and lays out the historiographical tradition of Diodorus' sources clearly: see pp. 226–8 for the *communis opinio* on Diodorus 10.9.1–8 as stemming from the *Tripartitum* and for the chronology, and p. 231 for the debt the *Tripartitum* owes to Aristoxenus: 'Diels hat es sehr wahrscheinlich gemacht, daß das Tripartitum auf Material aus Aristoxenus' *Lehren der Pythagoreer* (*Πυθαγορικαὶ ἀποφάσεις*) zurückgreift.' The extent to which the *Tripartitum* uses Aristoxenus is uncertain: Stefan Schorn points out to the authors via email that, while the *Tripartitum* uses material from Aristoxenus' *Pythagorikai apophaseis*, this 'does not mean that necessarily everything in the *Tripartitum* goes back to Aristoxenus'. For Schorn's strong case for Diodorus' indirect reception of Aristoxenus through the *Tripartitum* in the passages in question, see Schorn 2013: 232–3.

[5] Zhmud 2012: 72.

the rules of conduct which inform the so-called 'Pythagorean way of life' is a collection of maxims and sayings called *symbola* or *akusmata*.[6] These short sayings, which are often puzzling, and sometimes disparate or even contradictory, are ordered as answers to three kinds of questions: 'What is…?', 'What is most…?', and 'What should one do or not do?' Some parts of the collection can be traced back as far as 400 BC, when the younger Anaximander of Miletus wrote an allegorical interpretation of these rules.[7] Ancient and modern scholars agree that the core of the collection goes directly back to Pythagoras' teaching. The number of rules dedicated to the correct performance of religious rituals and to obtaining and maintaining ritual purity is remarkable. These rules contain many specific regulations about the time and manner of sacrificing and about rituals connected with death and burial.[8] The regulations on purity are particularly stringent, and they tend to make permanent the rules which are testified in cults of Greek deities as temporary periods of abstentions before visiting a sanctuary or before a mystery initiation.[9] The rules for approaching the sanctuary, washing the body, pouring the libations, which animals can and cannot be sacrificed, and

[6] On the terminology see the discussion of Zhmud 2012: 173. The material was collected by Boehm 1905, and his numeration of the individual *symbola* is commonly used.

[7] The bibliography on the *symbola* is vast. Burkert 1972: 166–72 and Zhmud 2012: 167–220 offer discussions of the sources, with different conclusions about the applicability of the rules in the lives of Pythagoras and his followers. Burkert maintains that most of these rules were adhered to and formed a set of guidelines for the so-called 'Pythagorean life'. Zhmud, who argues that the Pythagorean community was not a religious fraternity but a political *hetairia*, consequently argues that the *symbola* could not have been a code of conduct for all early Pythagoreans. Parker 1983: 291; 294–9 follows Burkert and sees the rules as 'a code of restrictions unique in Greek life' (291); see also Cornelli 2013: 69–73.

[8] See the detailed discussion in Parker 1983: 294–9.

[9] Burkert 1972: 174: 'The most prominent topic of the *acusmata* is sacrificial ritual; and the accounts of Herodotus, Isocrates, and Eudoxus speak of the special role of ritual ἁγνείαι among Pythagoras and his followers' (with references to Hdt. 2.81; Isoc. *Bus.* 28, Eudoxus, Fr. 36 Gisinger). Parker 1983: 294–9 discusses the Pythagorean *symbola* as being particularly concerned with divisions between men and gods, dead and living, sacred and profane, and sees them as special, stricter, and more rigorous rules of purity which separate Pythagoreans from other people and show more urgent concern for the religious objects to remain pure (296). Even Zhmud 2012, who sees the *symbola* as testimonies of superstitions (201), as contradictory, and as testifying of the 'splintered mind' (203), allows for the assumption that 'some proportion' of the *symbola* existed in the sixth–fifth centuries and was connected to Pythagoras (169). He too observes that many of them are concerned with religious purity and that they make permanent the temporal abstentions popular in cult (203). He rejects any connection of Pythagoras with mysticism and shamanism, but agrees with Nilsson 1955: 609, who regards the *symbola* as a direct continuation of Hesiod's rules, and states: 'If Pythagoras is to be included within some direction in Greek religion, then it should be "that which strove to attain the favour of the gods through the exact observance of religious commandments and rules" (Nilsson 1955: 578), rather than that which embraced the mystic and ecstatic.' Zhmud 2012: 204 concludes: 'Which of the commandments from Anaximander's collection could have been connected with the Pythagoreans must be decided in each specific case. The primary nucleus must most probably contain those precepts which are in some way linked with metempsychosis and are known beyond the collection of "symbols"'; (similar statements are made in Zhmud 2005: 147–51).

the appropriate manner of sacrificing bear witness to Pythagoras' extreme concern for purity and ritual correctness (*hosiotes*). In addition, Pythagoras was widely known in the Greek world as a philosopher who believed in the survival of the soul (*psyche*) after death. Pythagoras' belief in the transmigration of the soul (metempsychosis) is attested already by his contemporary, Xenophanes;[10] furthermore, all sources reporting his views use the word *ψυχή*, which makes it highly probable that Pythagoras used this expression too.[11] Taken together, Pythagoras' preoccupation with the concept of soul and his stringent ritual rules do suggest that this philosopher's regulations on purity encompassed the soul as well.

Further tentative support for this proposition could be sought in the fact that the philosophical discourse of the fourth century conceptualizes Pythagoras as an instructor on physical and spiritual purification. A passage which is attributed to Aristoxenus' *Life of Pythagoras* illustrates how fourth-century philosophers imagined that the Pythagoreans of the sixth century thought about the purification of body and soul. According to Aristoxenus, the Pythagoreans drew a distinction between physical and spiritual catharsis and utilized two different methods in order to conduct universal purification: 'The Pythagoreans, as Aristoxenus said, took care of the catharsis of their body with the means of medicine, and of their soul (*psyche*) with the means of music.'[12] This passage betrays significant influences of both Plato's and Aristotle's thought.[13] It is nevertheless noteworthy that an attempt is made to associate Pythagoras with teaching on the purification of the soul. Even if we cannot claim with certainty that Pythagoras' instruction on purification of the soul by the means of music represents a genuine sixth-century tradition, there must have been a reason why he was perceived as the author of such ideas—or at least as an especially appropriate figure to be credited with them—in this later period.

We can now return to the passage under discussion to see how the specifics of the view it attributes to Pythagoras correspond with those expressed in the other *symbola*. Pythagoras introduces the idea of a pure soul in the

[10] Fr. B 7 DK. On Xenophanes' views of Pythagorean transmigration in this fragment, Lesher 1992: 79–81 and Zhmud 2012: 30–2, with bibliography.

[11] Pythagoras' interest in metempsychosis is very well attested, but his exact opinion is debated. For an overview of ancient sources and modern views, Huffman 2009 and Cornelli 2013: 86–136. Parker 1983: 291 thinks that Pythagoras' doctrine must have allowed some scope for one's conduct in life to influence one's next incarnation. Zhmud 2012: 226–33, on the other hand, sees Pythagorean doctrine as influenced by 'Orphism', but modified in such a way as to imply the eternal rotation of the soul and not its final liberation from its corporeal form.

[12] Aristoxenus, Fr. 26 Wehrli: *οἱ Πυθαγορικοί, ὡς ἔφη Ἀριστόξενος, καθάρσει ἐχρῶντο τοῦ μὲν σώματος διὰ τῆς ἰατρικῆς, τῆς δὲ ψυχῆς διὰ τῆς μουσικῆς*. On the idea of healing through music and Pythagoras, see Hoessly 2001: 181–8.

[13] Zhmud 2012: 288; Pl. *Phd*. 67c–e on catharsis through philosophy; Arist. *Pol*. 1342a on the purification and healing of the soul through music, with Ford 2004: 309–36. Moulinier 1952: 119 allows for the possibility that similar ideas were circulating among the Pythagoreans of the Classical period.

context of entering a sacred space and performing a sacrificial ritual (*πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς προσιέναι τοὺς θύοντας*), and starts with a general request for pure garments (*καθαρὰς ἔχοντας ἐσθῆτας*). Bright garments (*λαμπράς*) were *de rigueur* in many cults, and prohibitions in sacred regulations in some cases explicitly include the ban of dark and non-white clothes.[14]

The specific rejection of costly garments (*πολυτελεῖς*) in our passage is one of many such attestations in Greek philosophy, and it agrees with other testimonies in Diodorus concerning the avoidance of luxury as part of the 'Pythagorean life'.[15] The rejection of extravagant clothing and expensive ornaments, such as jewellery, gold, and silver, is also well attested in sacred regulations.[16] Here, it seems, we are dealing with a typical Pythagorean extension of prohibitions in specific cults to all sacrificial rituals.

The next purity requirement relates to the body of the worshipper: *ὁμοίως δὲ μὴ μόνον τὸ σῶμα καθαρὸν παρεχομένους πάσης ἀδίκου πράξεως* (literally: 'similarly, those presenting themselves are not only to present their bodies clean of every unjust deed…'). Ritual purity of the body is an important and widely attested prerequisite for entering a sacred space. It is commonly achieved by abstaining from polluting substances or acts (notably blood, birth, or death) for specific periods and by washing and/or sprinkling with water.[17] Here, however, the stipulation of a body pure of any 'deed of injustice' implies an unjust *activity*. While 'deed' thus falls within the range of activities covered by traditional purity requirements—such as, for instance, sex, dealing with a corpse, attending a funeral, and so on—'injustice' raises a question: what activities were perceived as being both impure and unjust and thus affected entry

[14] A few examples: *LSCG* 68.5–6, sanctuary of Despoina at Lycosura, third century BC: no purple or black clothing. *LSS* 59.14–15, sanctuary of Zeus Kynthios and Athena Kynthia on Delos, second century BC: worshippers are to wear white clothing; *LSS* 91, sanctuary of Athena Lindia at Lindus, Rhodes, third century AD, l. 7: clean (*καθαράς*) clothing; *LSAM* 6, sanctuary of Demeter (?) on Cius, first century AD, ll. 4–5: bright clothes. White clothes are also attested for incubation rituals in the sanctuaries of Asclepius (*LSAM* 14, Pergamon, Asclepieion, third century AD, l. 9).

[15] Mikalson 2010: 54 and below. D.S. 10.7.1: Pythagoras urged his followers to strive for simplicity and to avoid extravagance (*polyteleia*), which he saw as a cause of destruction for humans.

[16] Extravagant clothing: purple clothes and clothes adorned with flowers banned in the sanctuary of Despoina at Lycosura, third century BC, *LSCG* 68.5–6; multicoloured or purple robes banned in the sanctuary of Demeter at Patrae, third century BC, *LSS* 33.5–6. Jewellery: (golden) jewellery banned in the sanctuary of Despoina at Lycosura, third century BC, *LSCG* 68.2–5 and l. 7; golden objects banned in the sanctuary of Demeter at Patrae, third century BC, *LSS* 33.3–5; golden objects and rings banned from the sanctuary of Leto at Xanthus, third–second century BC, *SEG* XXXVI 1221; golden objects banned in the cult of Demeter at Cius, first century AD, *LSAM* 6.7–8; golden jewellery and rings possibly banned in the cult of Asclepius at Pergamon, third century AD, *LSAM* 14.10–11; iron rings banned from the precinct of Zeus Kynthios and Athena Kynthia at Delos, second century BC [?], *LSS* 59.18–19. For a concise overview of forbidden items, see Lupu 2009: 16–17.

[17] See 'What Is Ritual Purity? A Concise Typology of Ritual Purity in Greek Religion' in the Introduction chapter (pp. 25–9).

into sanctuaries and the performance of rituals? Sexual intercourse is one area in which sacred regulations do distinguish between licit and illicit acts, and the period of abstention after an illicit type of intercourse is typically longer than after an acceptable kind. While this distinction is only attested from the Hellenistic period onwards, and is not made in the earliest texts, few though they are,[18] there are nevertheless two types of sexual pollution which had a moral dimension already in the Classical period: male prostitution and convicted (female) adultery. These acts were so strongly condemned that the perpetrators were excluded from participation in state cults.[19]

It is possible that sexual acts are meant in our passage. In the preceding section, Diodorus relates Pythagorean views concerning the frequency of sexual intercourse (not at all in summer, sparingly in winter), and advises moderation in all related matters, since indulgence leads to weakness, destruction, and loss of control.[20] Pythagoras was also credited with the idea that sexual intercourse should best be practised from the age of 20 onwards—and even then rarely and with a view to procreation[21]—and instructions concerning the strict adherence to monogamy have been associated with Pythagoreanism in a variety of sources.[22] In addition, πρᾶξις is found as a euphemism for sexual intercourse from Pindar onwards.[23]

Sexual activity, however, need not be the only restriction implied by our passage. The text explicitly states that one should abstain from 'every deed of injustice', suggesting that more than one activity could be meant. Jon Mikalson suggests that the reference to unjust deeds refers to the pan-Hellenic concern for the pollution incurred by homicide and that it may also refer to Pythagorean principles concerning dietary requirements—abstention from meat, mullets, eggs, and beans.[24] This dietary aspect may well have played a significant role in the Pythagorean concept of δίκη ('justice') and ἀδικία ('injustice'). One of the attested *symbola* is the question: 'What is most just?', and the answer is: 'To sacrifice.'[25] The question of whether Pythagoras allowed the consumption of meat, both in general and following sacrificial ritual, is contested. However, it is convincingly argued that, since he provided detailed rules on which animals and which parts of animals one can eat, he did allow meat consumption, albeit with some restrictions.[26] Unjust deeds, which pollute the body, could thus also imply eating prohibited foodstuffs.

[18] Parker 1983: 74–94. [19] Attested at Athens: Parker 1983: 94–7.

[20] D.S. 10.9.3–4. These passages were transmitted in the *Tripartitum* together with 10.9.6. For a discussion of their textual tradition, Schorn 2013: 219 and 226–33.

[21] Aristoxenus, Fr. 39 Wehrli, with Huffman 2008: 110–12.

[22] Burkert 1972: 170 n. 94; Parker 1983: 296.

[23] LSJ, s.v. πρᾶξις II.3. For example, Pi., Fr. 127 Schroeder; Aeschin. 1.158.

[24] Mikalson 2010: 66.

[25] Iamb. *VP* 82, probably following Aristotle, according to Riedweg 2005: 69 and 152 n. 126.

[26] For instance, Parker 1983: 294–9 argues that the Pythagoreans refused to eat meat and thus isolated themselves from religious and political life. Zhmud 2012: 234–7 adopts a more

Murder, however, poses a problem. If murder is deemed to be an unjust deed which pollutes the body, what then is polluting to the soul? In the Classical period murder was certainly considered as being one of the most polluting acts: the killer was, by proclamation, formally excluded from 'lustral water, libations, mixing bowls, shrines, agora'.[27] Fifth- and fourth-century BC sources display an acute sensitivity towards circumstances of homicide, while Greek tragedy testifies that the question of intent played a major role in assessing the degree of a homicide's pollution.[28] Angelos Chaniotis identifies homicide law as an important influence on the development of the idea of the purity of the mind: since secular law came to differentiate and treat separately different categories of manslaughter—such as involuntary homicide or premeditated murder—changes in secular law had an indirect impact on beliefs regarding ritual purity, an effect which he observes as being a paradigmatic case of ritual dynamics.[29] Given that, already in the seventh century BC, Draco's law on homicide treated different categories of manslaughter separately, one can argue that homicide had long been seen as polluting not only the body (accidental or involuntary homicide), but, in some cases (intentional, premeditated murder), also the soul. Strictly speaking, then, some categories of homicide would cause bodily pollution, others a universal pollution—that is, pollution of the body and the soul.

If *adikai praxeis*, unjust deeds—that is, illicit sexual intercourse, murder, and dietary transgressions (consumption of prohibited foodstuff)—pollute the body, what is it that pollutes the soul? We must pay close attention to the phrasing in our passage, and especially to the aspect and the tense of the verb: one is to approach the gods and perform the sacrifice not just with a 'pure soul' but with a soul that is, as the present participle suggests, actively pursuing purity in the moment of the encounter with the divinities and the performance of the ritual: *τὴν ψυχὴν ἁγνεύουσαν*. If the formulation is genuine, Pythagoras might well have in mind here the active and conscious mental processes which are performed in the moment of sacrifice. *ψυχὴ ἁγνεύουσα* might denote what one thinks, feels, and perhaps utters during

selective approach to the sources and carefully discusses the (highly contradictory!) traditions regarding Pythagorean vegetarianism. He concludes that the 'symbols' did not demand complete abstinence from animal foods, only from the flesh of non-sacrificial animals or from certain organs. According to Zhmud 2012: 235, the tradition of the vegetarian Pythagoras developed in the fourth century BC. Zhmud 2012: 237 considers the report of Iamblichus (*VP* 85), according to which Pythagoras claimed that the souls of the departed do not enter sacrificial animals so they are safe to eat, to be credible.

[27] Dem. 20.158. On murder and pollution, see Parker 1983: 104–43; for a different view, see Osborne 2011: 168; 171–2; see also our discussion in '*Oresteia*, performed 458 BC' in Ch. 8 (pp. 155–65).

[28] Parker 1983: 111. Plato's *Laws* display a strong awareness of moralizing pollution: for instance, Plato states that the man who hires an assassin is 'polluted in soul' (872a).

[29] Chaniotis 2012: 127.

the encounter with the gods and the performance of the ritual.[30] The noun *hagneia* and the related verb *hagneuo* denote not just ritual purity in absolute terms, but also specifically a state of freedom from pollution.[31] A person who is in the state of *hagneia* is a person who is abstaining from contact with pollutants and has established a temporal distance from them. This is why adjective *hagnos* and verb *hagneuo* are often followed in Greek by a qualifier in the genitive: one is pure from specific pollutants. In the case of the soul, it lies at hand to suppose that it should be pure from polluting thoughts or feelings.

The idea that a special state of the soul is necessary for performing religious rituals is in agreement with Pythagoras' well-attested concern for the separation of the human and divine spheres. Many *symbola* enforce the divisions between 'man and god, dead and living, sacred and profane'.[32] One of these is particularly illuminating, and concerns the careful attention to be paid to separating profane and sacred spaces: 'When you set off to a shrine to worship, neither say, nor do anything in between that belongs to everyday life (*biotikon*).'[33] This *symbolon* stresses the importance of acquiring *hosiotes* in both words and deeds already on the way to the sacred space: the separation of the domains of everyday life and religious experience commences even before the worshipper has set foot on the sacred ground.

Hence, the journey itself presents the visitor with the opportunity to gradually enter into the state of soul which will facilitate an auspicious encounter with the divine.[34] Since the importance of appropriate deeds and words while one is *on the way* to the sanctuary is stressed, it is logical to conclude that once *in* the sanctuary the worshipper must also pay careful attention to both, and must fully separate himself from the profane. If the separation of *psyche* pertains to separation from the profane as well, then the active pursuit of purity by the worshipper's soul might well have included the performance of prayers interspersed with periods of contemplative silence, both of which constitute *euphemia*.[35] A *psyche* should consider *ta*

[30] Pythagoras' concept of psyche included noetic and intellectual capacities, encompassing intellect (*nous*), reason (*phren*), and passion (*thymos*). On this and further characteristics of Pythagorean psychology, see Sandywell 1996: 214–16.

[31] See 'Language of Purity' in the Introduction chapter (pp. 32–3).

[32] Parker 1983: 295.

[33] Iamb. *Protr*. p. 106 Pistelli, *symbolon*, no. 1: *εἰς ἱερὸν ἀπιὼν προσκυνῆσαι μηδὲν ἄλλο μεταξὺ βιωτικὸν μήτε λέγε μήτε πράττε*.

[34] The idea that the journey to a sanctuary offers an opportunity for the worshipper to acquire the state of mental purity is attested in Xenophon, who wrote that temples and altars should have a conspicuous place off the beaten path, for 'it is pleasant to make a prayer just on seeing them and to approach them being in a state of religious purity (*hagnos echontas*)', *ναοῖς γε μὴν καὶ βωμοῖς χώραν ἔφη* [sc. Socrates] *εἶναι πρεπωδεστάτην ἥτις ἐμφανεστάτη οὖσα ἀστιβεστάτη εἴη· ἡδὺ μὲν γὰρ ἰδόντας προσεύξασθαι, ἡδὺ δὲ ἁγνῶς ἔχοντας προσιέναι*. (*Mem*. 3.8.10). On this passage, see Mikalson 2010: 133.

[35] Gödde 2011: 20–3.

hosia.[36] This would be the positive aspect of the *hagneia*. The negative, the 'freedom from,' aspect that the term implies, would constitute of avoidance of improper thoughts. Since Pythagoras' religious rules are based on the careful separation of the divine and human, sacred and profane, perhaps the improper thoughts are profane, everyday concerns, which are out of place in a sanctuary.

Should the 'soul pursuing purity' encompass not only the thoughts but also the utterance of religiously correct words, it lies at hand that a prayer was the sort of utterance that would be deemed admissible.[37] It might be significant that the very next regulation in Diodorus' passage pertains precisely to this topic, for it addresses the proper objects of prayers. Immediately following the *symbolon* under discussion, Diodorus writes (10.9.7–8):

> ὅτι ὁ αὐτὸς ἀπεφαίνετο τοῖς θεοῖς εὔχεσθαι δεῖν τὰ ἀγαθὰ τοὺς φρονίμους ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀφρόνων· τοὺς γὰρ ἀσυνέτους ἀγνοεῖν, τί ποτέ ἐστιν ἐν τῷ βίῳ κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἀγαθόν. (10.9.8) Ὅτι ὁ αὐτὸς ἔφασκε δεῖν ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς ἁπλῶς εὔχεσθαι τἀγαθά, καὶ μὴ κατὰ μέρος ὀνομάζειν, οἷον ἐξουσίαν, κάλλος, πλοῦτον, τἄλλα τὰ τούτοις ὅμοια· πολλάκις γὰρ τούτων ἕκαστον τοὺς κατ᾽ ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτῶν τυχόντας τοῖς ὅλοις ἀνατρέπειν.
>
> For he himself [Pythagoras] disclosed that wise men should pray to the gods for the good things for the benefit of the unwise, since the unwise are incapable of understanding what in life is truly good. (10.9.8) He used to say that it was necessary in prayers to pray simply for the good things, and not to name them individually, such as for instance to pray for power, beauty, wealth, and other similar things. For often each of these things, when those who desired them acquire them, turning against them, totally ruins them.

The sentiment that the object of prayers should be the good thing in general is well attested in the later philosophical tradition.[38] For what we can tell, Pythagoras might be credited with this thought;[39] furthermore, we can observe that Diodorus or his source arranged the Pythagorean rules in such

[36] By conceptualizing the purity of the soul as an active process performed in the moment of ritual action, a process which is a prerequisite for the efficacy of the ritual and a guarantee of a beneficial encounter with the divine, this passage resembles later similar formulations, such as the Epidaurean regulation defining *hagneia* as a process of 'thinking religiously correct thoughts.' On the inscription from Epidaurus, see 'Belief and Inner Purity' in the Introduction chapter (pp. 4–8) and 'Continuities: Early Concepts of Inner Purity and Pollution and Greek Sacred Regulations' in the Conclusion chapter (pp. 283–5).

[37] In the Greek world, prayers could be silent or uttered aloud, and the instances of silent prayers represent exceptions. See on this Pulleyn 1997: 184–8. Pulleyn 1997: 186 adduces a testimony of Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 4.26.171.1–2) regarding Pythagoras' alleged instruction 'to pray aloud … because they wanted the prayers to be just, of the sort that nobody would be ashamed to make if there were many witnesses'.

[38] On the Greek philosophers' attitudes to prayers, see Mikalson 2010: 43–54; and Ch. 5, pp. 110–13.

[39] The source for this statement might have been the *Tripartitum* as well: Schorn 2013: 228–33. See on this next note.

a way that the proper topics of prayer follow the passage on the ritual purity.[40] Does this imply that Diodorus or his source perceived the prayer as the type of thought which the soul pursuing purity was allowed to entertain in the sacred precinct? This suggestion seems attractive, especially when we consider that the passage advises the worshippers to abstain from prayers for profane things, such as power, beauty, wealth, and similar things. Both with regard to the prayer and to the ritual purity of soul, we note an attempt to establish the lines of demarcation separating the two realms, the sacred and the profane: the prayer is suitable if it abstains from asking for specific worldly assets; the soul, too, is pure if it abstains from everyday thoughts, as we argue.

Aristoxenus, or the author of the *Tripartitum*, or whoever the original editor of the passages in the Diodorus' *Libraries* 10.9.3–7 was,[41] seems to have arranged a series of *symbola* based on the relationship of their subject-matter. We pointed out that the passages concerning sexual practices preceded our fragment (10.9.4); the content of *euphemia*, namely the performance of suitable prayers, is treated in the subsequent passages (10.9.7–8). Both of these subjects—sex and prayer—are, in our opinion, important for the understanding of our fragment (10.9.6).

The passage concerning 'soul pursuing purity', as it is preserved in Diodorus, is remarkable for its careful composition and polemical tone. The structure is based on a centripetal gradation of zones of purity which are split into external, somatic, and internal: the precept starts with instructions on the cleanliness of clothes (external); treats possible pollutants of the body (somatic); then focuses on the pursuit of purity by the soul (internal). The tone is particularly noteworthy, as *μὴ μόνον τὸ σῶμα… ἀλλὰ καὶ* intimates disapproval of a conception of purity which is based exclusively on concerns of the body. This type of polemic is attested in later testimonies, including sacred regulations, which emphasize the importance of inner purity over washing and bodily cleanliness, as Angelos Chaniotis demonstrated.[42]

[40] Issues of *Quellenforschung* present here many difficulties: there is a general consensus that *symbola* recorded by Diodorus in 10.9.1–8 all stem from one source, but the question of internal organization of that particular source is difficult to answer. Comparisons with relevant passages from Diogenes Laertius' *Life of Pythagoras* (8.9–10) indicate some overlaps in sequence of *symbola*: there is some homogeneity in terms of content, if not the language, between Diogenes and Diodorus. However, whether this organization of material goes back to a fourth-century BC source, as some have argued, or it stems from later tradition is a thorny issue. Schorn 2013: 230–3 provides an overview of the key problems.

[41] On the textual tradition for the doxographic section in Diodorus, see Schorn 2013: 226–33.

[42] Chaniotis 1997, *passim*; and 2012: esp. 136 for the 'implicit criticism on the observance of ritual purity'. Cf. esp. *LSS* 91. 4–5 (3rd cent. AD, Lindus, Rhodes, but probably a republication of an older text): *μὴ τὸ* [*σῶ*]*μα μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν κεκαθαρμένου*[*ς*], and Totti (1985, no. 61), no dating possible: *ἁγνὰς χεῖρας ἔχων καὶ νοῦν καὶ γλῶτταν ἀληθῆ* / *εἴσ*<*ι*>*θι, μὴ λοετροῖς, ἀλλὰ νόῳ καθαρός*; *AP* XIV 71 and 74. Explicit polemic is attested in Theophrastus (*Peri*

It is possible that the structure and tone of the Pythagorean passage are the products of the fourth- or third-century redaction, or of the subsequent textual tradition, but the kernel of the thought presented in it—the insistence on the purity of body and of the soul—is, as we argue, probably genuinely Pythagorean. If we are correct, this would be the first and the earliest explicit attestation of the requirement to offer sacrifices whilst inwardly pure. The idea will be decisively shaped by Plato, and later becomes very popular among Greek thinkers:[43] Xenophon attributes to Socrates the thought that the sacrifices of the good are worth more to the gods than those of the wicked;[44] Plato argues that the evil person is impure (*akathartos*) in his soul, whereas the good are pure, and since gods do not receive gifts from the polluted, it is in vain for the religiously incorrect (*hoi anosioi*) to strive to please the gods.[45] Furthermore, the same idea of inner purity as a prerequisite for successful sacrifice was attributed to Zaleucus of Locri, a shadowy mytho-historical lawgiver whom Diodorus mistakenly holds to be Pythagoras' disciple.[46] Diodorus quotes the following statement as belonging to the general preamble to Zaleucus' legislation (D.S. 12.20.2):

> σέβεσθαί τε τοὺς θεούς, ὡς πάντων τῶν ἐν τῷ βίῳ καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν αἰτίους ὄντας τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, ἔχειν δὲ καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν καθαρὰν πάσης κακίας, ὡς τῶν θεῶν οὐ χαιρόντων ταῖς τῶν πονηρῶν θυσίαις τε καὶ δαπάναις, ἀλλὰ ταῖς τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν δικαίαις τε καὶ καλαῖς ἐπιτηδεύσεσι.
>
> [Men] should worship the gods as the origin of all that is beautiful and good for humans. They should hold the soul pure (*psychen katharan*) from every evil (*pases kakias*), since the gods do not rejoice in either the sacrifices or costly gifts of the wicked people, but in the just and noble practices of good men.

The similarities between this passage and the statements of Xenophon's Socrates and Plato are remarkable, in so far as Zaleucus also stresses the difference between the sacrifices of the wicked and those of good men. The Pythagorean statement, by contrast, contains manifold references to realities of ritual purity, and is oriented towards the instruction of what should be done, whereas in the passage attributed to Zaleucus, as in Xenophon and Plato, the thought is more general and represents a critique of popular misconceptions about the divine, rather than instructions for the correct preparation

Eusebeias, Fr. 9 Pötscher = Porphyry, *De abstinentia* 2.19): on this passage, see Ch. 3, pp. 73–4. Mikalson 2010: 65–6 argues that Theophrastus mirrors popular, non-philosophical views. We discuss Plato and subsequent evidence in Vol. II.

[43] See also Ch. 3, pp. 73–4. [44] *Mem*. 1.3.3.

[45] *Lg.* 4.716e2–717a3. On the purity of soul and sacrifices in Xenophon and Plato, see Mikalson 2010: 64–5.

[46] 12.20.1. Mistakenly, because according to the traditional chronology Zaleucus' *floruit* is a century earlier than Pythagoras'.

for the sacrificial ritual. Furthermore, it is generally acknowledged that Diodorus is not a particularly reliable source for Zaleucus: Diodorus' reports on Zaleucus are derived from an inferior source that stems from what Peter Green labelled 'Pythagorean-inspired and hagiolatric tradition'.[47] Essentially, Zaleucus' views expressed in Diodorus 12.20 mirror the Platonic reception and interpretation of Pythagorean ideas: later, presumably Hellenistic, tradition projected the Platonic understanding of Pythagorean concepts onto the authority of Zaleucus, who conveniently became a pupil of Pythagoras.[48] Unlike Pythagoras' *psyche hagneusa*, Zaleucus' *psyche kathara* is a Platonic notion.[49]

[47] The sources on Zaleucus are commonly divided into 'primary tradition' (from Pindar to Demosthenes), which is deemed fairly reliable, and 'secondary tradition' which is mostly unreliable and moralizing. Diodorus belongs to the latter. See on this Dunbabin 1948: 71: 'There is no point of contact between Diodoros and the older tradition, and so much of him as may be assigned to a definite source comes not from a tradition independent of Aristotle, Ephoros, and Demosthenes but from a forgery of probably later date than these authorities.' Similarly, Adcock 1927: 106. Mühl 1929 allows for a historicity of some of Diodorus' information, as far as it corresponds to that from the 'primary tradition', but remarks that much of it is later addition, influenced by Plato, Aristotle, and Stoicism. He argues that D.S. 12.20.2 is a Stoic thought, as it is attested in Seneca's *Letters* (95.47) and cannot be ascribed to Zaleucus (Mühl 1929: 118–19). According to Gagarin 1986: 59, the Zaleucus account in Diodorus 12.20 is 'thoroughly unreliable'. For an overview, see Green 2006: 206–9, with further literature. Green points out that Diodorus' report is mainly based on a late tradition inspired by Pythagoras narratives that also influenced Iamblichus (*VP* 23, 104, 130, 172) and Diogenes Laertius (8.1.15–16).

[48] Green 2006: 207–8 supports the view that Plato *Lg.* 10.886a reworks Pythagorean concepts which have, in turn, influenced the representation of Zaleucus' views in Diodorus (esp. p. 208 with n. 87). On Pythagoreanism in Platonic thought, see Burkert 1972: 83–96 and now Horky 2013, esp. 82–124.

[49] We revisit these passages in Volume II.

3

Heraclitus on Purification

Inner Purity and Sacrifice after Pythagoras

Summary: Heraclitus of Ephesus, *c*.500 BC. We discuss Heraclitus' general stance on ritual purity as demonstrated in Frs. B 5 DK and B 61 DK before focusing on Fr. B 69 DK, which states that the sacrifices of 'people completely purified in every respect' (*τῶν ἀποκεκαθαρμένων παντάπασιν ἀνθρώπων*) are few in number. The authenticity of the fragment has been doubted and the matter cannot be settled with confidence. We discuss its original context in Iamblichus' *On the Mysteries*, and provide an outline of the philosophical debates of the nexus of inner purity and sacrifice.

The figure of Heraclitus of Ephesus towers among the Presocratics. An influential yet almost inaccessible thinker, he was famed as much for his cosmological views as for his misanthropy and for his scathing criticism of other thinkers of his day. Heraclitus is notoriously difficult to interpret, as he expressed himself in short, enigmatic, and often paradoxical statements, which are a reflection of his concept of the world as a unity-in-opposites.[1] While the exact dates of his life are unknown, Heraclitus' main period of activity is placed at the end of the sixth and the beginning of the fifth centuries BC. His fragments dealing with religion—such as Fr. B 69 DK,[2] which we discuss below—are transmitted in later authors, mostly from the third century AD and later, where they were often employed in philosophical debates and polemics between proponents and opponents of paganism.

Heraclitus displays a vivid interest in cult and rituals[3]—it has even been argued that his comprehensive treatment of rituals resembles an attempt at

[1] For an accessible discussion with bibliography, Hussey 1999.

[2] Heraclitus' passages are cited by the Diels–Kranz numbering.

[3] Most 2013: 157 identifies thirty fragments generally concerned with religion, '6 on cult practices (B5, B14, B15, B68, B69, and B92 D-K); 3 on funeral practices (B24, B25, and B96 D-K); 6 on individual Olympian gods (4 on Zeus, B32, B41, B64, and B120 D-K; and 2 on Apollo, B51 and B93 D-K); 8 on other specified individual divinities (5 on Justice, B16, B28, B66, B94, and B114 D-K; 2 on War, B53 and B80 D-K; and 1 on a person's governing deity, B119 D-K); and 7 on unidentified divinities (5 in the singular, B67, B78, B79, B83, and B102 D-K; and 2 in the plural, B62 and B86 D-K)', and ten more which are indirectly concerned with religion (listed at p. 158).

systematic classification.[4] He expressed his views on the Delphic[5] and Sibylline oracles;[6] on mysteries and initiations;[7] on phallic processions and ritual obscenities;[8] on catharsis with blood; and on praying to the statues of divinities.[9] Heraclitus' fragments tend to be cryptic and ambivalent and to allow for a range of interpretations. Accordingly, modern scholars display a wide range of attitudes towards the fragments dealing with religious practices depending on their perception of the philosopher.[10] A common opinion among commentators used to be that Heraclitus is a radical critic of Greek religion and that he juxtaposes his own view of divinity with the mistaken beliefs of the Greeks.[11] The current trend in scholarship is towards perceiving Heraclitus' criticism not so much as targeting the belief and rituals as reprehending the uncritical popular perception of these rituals.[12]

Heraclitus addressed the issue of purificatory rituals on several occasions. Fr. B 5 DK deals with the purification by blood:

> *καθαίρονται δ' ἄλλῳ αἵματι μιαινόμενοι οἷον εἴ τις εἰς πηλὸν ἐμβὰς πηλῷ ἀπονίζοιτο. μαίνεσθαι δ' ἂν δοκοίη, εἴ τις αὐτὸν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιφράσαιτο οὕτω ποιέοντα. καὶ τοῖς ἀγάλμασι δὲ τουτέοισιν εὔχονται, ὁκοῖον εἴ τις δόμοισι λεσχηνεύοιτο, οὔ τι γινώσκων θεοὺς οὐδ' ἥρωας οἵτινές εἰσι.*
>
> They purify themselves by polluting themselves with other[13] blood, as if someone who had stepped in mud would clean himself with mud. If someone observed a man doing such a thing, he would take that man to be insane. And they pray to these statues, like someone who would have a chat with a house, not really knowing who gods or heroes actually are.

Heraclitus seems dismissive of the beliefs and religious practices of his contemporaries, and he often, as here, uses the third person plural to designate them, creating an impression that he himself is apart and has a different perspective from the *hoi polloi*.[14] The perspective is often the key to

[4] Adomenas 1999. [5] Fr. B 93 DK. [6] Fr. B 92 DK.

[7] Fr. B 14 DK. Schefer 2000 goes as far as to posit that the entire layout of Heraclitus' book, with its assumed three *logoi*, imitated the tripartite structure of the mysteries (*καθαρμός*; *παράδοσις* of *Hieros logos*; *ἐποπτεία*), and that the book itself represented a 'Mysterienweihung' (p. 73); she considers it to be 'ein echter Mysterienlogos'.

[8] Fr. B 15 DK and B 68 DK. [9] Fr. B 5 DK.

[10] Four main tropes of scholarship on Heraclitus' views of religion are summed up in Most 2013: 154–7 (Heraclitus as 'an impassioned Enlightenment opponent of popular superstition'; as 'a philosophical reformer of traditional religion'; as 'a mystic adept of Greek mystery religions, an initiate himself and perhaps even a hierophant of an esoteric wisdom'; as a 'specialist expert in the comparative study of religions').

[11] See e.g. Marcovich 1967: 454; Kahn 1979: 263–6.

[12] Osborne 1997; Adomenas 1999; Most 2007 and 2013 (the latter esp. on Heraclitus' invitation to critical contemplation on religious practices).

[13] There is some textual difficulty here. *ἄλλως* is transmitted, we follow Fränkel's suggested emendation to *ἄλλῳ* Most 2013: 159 speculates that '*ἄλλως* is probably negative in meaning, as is usually the case in later usage, and it modifies *καθαίρονται*, indicating the futility of their operation' and translates 'they are purified in vain'.

[14] Cf. Most 2013: 166: 'It is striking that, though Heraclitus describes various religious practices performed by people in the third person plural, he never says who these people are nor

understanding Heraclitus' fragments dealing with religious practices: in Fr. B 5 DK, as elsewhere, he offers several perspectives on the one phenomenon. Heraclitus stresses that a different logic applies to the ritual practices and that their interpretation and meaning is based on different semantic rules. What he says about the purification of blood by blood here, for example, relates to the common form of purification after a shedding of blood: as Robert Parker points out, Heraclitus emphasizes the paradox of 'washing blood with blood, of purifying by defilement'.[15] It is difficult to judge the extent to which Heraclitus disapproved of purification by blood, but what he makes obvious is that the meaning of rituals is determined by their own logic which is different from that employed on a day-to-day basis.[16] Perceived in this way, his remark on praying in Fr. B 5 DK can also be interpreted as less a rejection of prayer altogether, and more as a rejection of the common practice of addressing the statues as if they were gods. Essentially, Heraclitus denies that the masses have a full understanding of the true nature of the gods and heroes, and he also seems to imply that they have a mistaken perception of rituals.

In our opinion, Heraclitus' statement about the sea (Fr. B 61 DK) can also be classified as a fragment that deals with religion, and especially with purification. Heraclitus describes the sea as 'the water which is the purest (*katharotaton*) and the most polluted (*miarotaton*): for it is drinkable and represents salvation for the fish, whereas for humans it is undrinkable and deadly'.[17] By the fifth century BC the belief that the 'sea washes away all evils from among men' was widespread, as was the use of sea water for cathartic purposes:[18] in this fragment, we suggest, Heraclitus picks on the traditional idea that salty water is among the best and strongest purificants and criticizes it.

In Fr. B 61 DK Heraclitus apparently implies that the sea represents different things to the fish, to humans who are thirsty or in a shipwreck, and to those performing religious rituals. For the fish it is the essential biotope; for those thirsty and drowning it is useless or destructive; for those performing purificatory rituals the sea is the purest (*καθαρώτατον*) of purificatory matters. In addition to presenting these different perspectives, Heraclitus also plays on the different meanings of words—such as *katharos*, which can mean 'ritually pure' but also 'pure, unmixed'—which enables him to evoke a common concept and to then completely subvert it in the rest of the sentence.

characterizes them in any way except by what they do. Are they experts or laymen, wise or foolish, people he is inviting us to emulate or to mock? In his surviving texts at least, Heraclitus does not tell us the answers to these questions, but leaves it to us to reflect upon them.'

[15] Parker 1983: 372; on this fragment see also Portulas 2006.

[16] Osborne 1997: 90–5.

[17] Fr. B 61 DK: *θάλασσα ὕδωρ καθαρώτατον καὶ μιαρώτατον, ἰχθύσι μὲν πότιμον καὶ σωτήριον, ἀνθρώποις δὲ ἄποτον καὶ ὀλέθριον*.

[18] Eur. *IT* 1193; on sea water as the most prized cathartic water, Parker 1983: 226–7.

Any Greek reading *θάλασσα ὕδωρ καθαρώτατον*, 'sea is the purest water', would associate *καθαρός* with ritual purity because only in the context of purification was sea water considered to be the cleanest matter: otherwise, after swimming in the sea, as the *Odyssey* often exemplifies, one needed to be washed.[19] The use of *μιαρώτατον*, superlative of *miaros*, a term regularly denoting ritual impurity,[20] completely subverts the previous statement and allows Heraclitus to demonstrate that there are several perspectives on the same issue. By drawing attention to the fact that the sea water can be deadly (*olethrion*), Heraclitus highlights the paradox of using the corpse-infested matter for purification. Whereas in the first fragment we adduced (Fr. B 5 DK) Heraclitus canvasses the contradiction of using pollutant for purification, in Fr. B 61 DK it is paradoxical that a polluted matter is, from the ritual perspective, the strongest purificant.

There is another Heraclitean fragment about the purity of those sacrificing which is quoted by Iamblichus in *On the Mysteries*. This text was composed towards the end of the third century AD,[21] in response to and as a refutation of Iamblichus' teacher Porphyry's views on theurgy. Porphyry had rejected animal sacrifice,[22] whereas Iamblichus defends it in his fifth book.[23] Iamblichus' justification of animal sacrifice is based on observation that there are two types of divinities: immaterial gods, who do not receive material (*hyle*) sacrifices, and material gods, who do receive them (5.14). Furthermore, humans too can become immaterial, when they are raised up in the intellect, wholly soul and out of the body, but the vast majority are material and confined to the body (5.15.1–5). Accordingly, there are two types of worship (*threskeia*): the one is simple, immaterial, and pure (*hagnos*) from all taint of generation and relates to free souls, and the other is corporeal and material, proper to souls which are not purified (*me katharai psychai*) nor released from all generation (5.15.5–12). What follows is the sentence relevant to our discussion of Heraclitus.

The first part of Iamblichus' sentence (*Myst*. 5.15.13–16) is Heraclitus Fr. B 69 DK (= 98g Marcovich):

> (A) *θυσιῶν τοίνυν τίθημι διττὰ εἴδη· τὰ μὲν τῶν ἀποκεκαθαρμένων παντάπασιν ἀνθρώπων, οἷα ἐφ' ἑνὸς ἄν ποτε γένοιτο σπανίως, ὥς φησιν Ἡράκλειτος, ἢ τινων ὀλίγων εὐαριθμήτων ἀνδρῶν·*

The rest of Iamblichus' sentence is as follows (*Myst*. 5.15.16–18):

[19] A classic scene is *Od.* 6.137–8, where Odysseus is 'disfigured with brine', and has to wash himself thoroughly in l. 210–26.

[20] See 'What Is Ritual Purity? A Concise Typology of Ritual Purity in Greek Religion' in the Introduction chapter (p. 27) and Glossary, s.v. On *miaros*, see also Parker 1983: 3–5.

[21] For a discussion of the dating with bibliography, Clarke, Dillon, and Hershbell 2003: xxvii.

[22] See this chapter, pp. 74–5.

[23] For a thorough discussion of Iamblichus' fifth book, Clarke 2001: 39–57.

(B) *τὰ δ' ἔνυλα καὶ σωματοειδῆ καὶ διὰ μεταβολῆς συνιστάμενα, οἷα τοῖς ἔτι κατεχομένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ σώματος ἁρμόζει.*

(A) Indeed I give two types of sacrifices: those of the people who have completely purified themselves in every respect, which would be a rare thing to happen for even a single man, as Heraclitus states, or for a few, easy-to-count, (B) the other being material and corporeal and subject to change, as is suited to those still in the grip of the body.

Iamblichus then goes on to explain that there are two types of people, those whose souls are outside the body, and those whose souls are in their body (5.15). The second type of people are the vast majority, they are ruled by natural forces, direct their gaze downwards, towards nature, and employ practical reasoning solely. Those whose souls are outside the body are the theurgists, the few who are enlightened, intellectually superior, and turned away from the material and towards the divine. Each group practices the mode of worship which is suited to their nature and the nature of the divinities: the theurgists should practice an immaterial mode of worship which consists of intellectual gifts (*noera dora*; 5.19.19–20); those ruled by natural forces should practice material worship, including animal sacrifice (5.18).

Turning to Iamblichus' sentence quoted above, which partly derives from Heraclitus, we can first note that the juxtaposition of two modes of sacrifice does not imply criticism. Rather, Iamblichus draws a distinction between material and immaterial sacrifices and provides justification for each type. Second, we can establish that within Iamblicus' theurgic theology, to be 'completely purified in every respect' does not mean to acquire the state of ritual purity. Instead, *apokathairomai* denotes the detachment of the soul from the taint of materiality: the purification is a process of gaining freedom from nature and implies transcendence to a higher plane. To be 'entirely pure in every respect' is, in Iamblichus, tantamount to becoming a theurgist, and does not signify the obtaining of purity as a prerequisite for ritual practice.

Since Iamblichus adopts a specific, narrow, and philosophical, rather than ritual, definition of purity, it is extremely difficult to gauge the meaning of *ἀποκεκαθαρμένων παντάπασιν ἀνθρώπων* in the original, Heraclitean context. Similarly, *thysiai*, the sacrifices of such individuals in Iamblichus, do not denote conventional offerings, but intellectual (noeric) gifts. Both crucial terms that Iamblichus employs in this sentence (*thysia*, *apokathairo*) are highly problematic, because in conventional use they denote 'sacrifice' and 'ritual purity', but he attributes very specific, philosophical and theurgic meanings to them (noeric gifts, detachment from the body).

Furthermore, the authenticity of the fragment, as well as the issue of exactly which part constitutes the quotation of Heraclitus, are disputed. Diels–Kranz assume that the first part of Iamblichus' sentence (which we label 'A' above, for convenience) is a quotation from Heraclitus, referring to

a sacrifice by humans who are completely purified. This purity is taken to be internal purity, as Diels speaks of 'innerlich vollständig gereinigten Menschen'; 'people completely purified internally'.[24] Jon Mikalson—who does not discuss the question of what should be attributed to Heraclitus here—points out that the Greek does not contain an explicit reference to internal purity, and states that 'if, in fact, Heraclitus meant an "inner purity" and linked it to sacrifice, he then may be the first to indicate concern for the "morality" of those who sacrifice, but the typically opaque brevity of this Heraclitean fragment does not allow a firm conclusion'.[25] Miroslav Marcovich was of the opinion that only the segment '*οἷα ἐφ' ἑνὸς ἄν ποτε γένοιτο σπανίως*' relates to Heraclitus (Marcovich Fr. 98g), and even then only vaguely so: 'it is no more than a feeble and distant echo' of the spirit of 49 DK (= Fr. 98 Marcovich: 'one man is like ten thousand if he is the best').[26] Kahn goes further, maintaining that none of Iamblichus' passage should be attributed to Heraclitus.[27] Meijer leaves the issue of attribution to Heraclitus open and treats all of Iamblichus' passage (A and B) as a possible part of Heraclitus' script: he associates the passage with Heraclitus' doctrines about prayer, and posits that Heraclitus distinguishes between 'the entirely material sacrifice of the man in the street and those of men who are internally pure and clean, as can occur sporadically in the case of an individual'.[28] Adomenas considers the fragment to be genuinely Heraclitean.[29] Schefer tacitly assumes that it is genuine, apparently in its entirety. She takes it to be a paraphrase or quotation from Heraclitus, and places this fragment—together with B 5 DK (= Marcovich 86), discussed above—towards the beginning of the original book.[30] In his 2006 edition, Mouraviev prints: '*ἔφ' ἑνὸς ἄν ποτε γένοιτο σπανίως* (sc. *θύσια*[31] *καθαρά*)' as Fr. 69 and relates it to purity of sacrifice.[32]

If the fragment does reflect Heraclitus' ideas, what would be the original meaning of 'people purified completely and in every respect'? For Heraclitus, the soul (*ψυχή*) was the seat of personal identity and character, and was perceived as the centre of intelligence, moral character, and action.[33] He mentions *ψυχή* in several fragments, with his usual cryptic ambivalence.[34] What seems certain is that, for him, the soul is the essence of living beings. What continues to be debated is his eschatological concept or concepts: some scholars argue that, for Heraclitus, all *ψυχαί* are mortal;[35] others perceive different

[24] Diels 1901. [25] Mikalson 2010: 66 n. 65.

[26] A view shared by Most 2013: 162.

[27] Marcovich 1967: 519–20 Fr. 98g; Kahn 1979: 288–9.

[28] Meijer 1981: 223–4, stating that *if* the idea is first attested in Heraclitus then it 'was very influential' and foreshadows the views of Plato and Theophrastus.

[29] Adomenas 1999: 90 (*contra* Babut 1975). [30] Schefer 2000: 71–2.

[31] *Sic*. [32] Mouraviev 2006: 170.

[33] For an overview, Robb 1983 and Hussey 1999: 101–5. For an in-depth discussion, see Claus 1981: 125–38.

[34] Frs. B 12, 36, 45, 77, 85, 98, 107, 117, 118, 136 DK. [35] Nussbaum 1972; Schofield 1991.

destinies for different souls, some of which would outlast the bodies and some of which would be dissolved in earth and water.[36] If Heraclitus really did address complete purity as the general prerequisite for those performing sacrifices, he might, perhaps, have had the purity of soul in mind.

However, if Iamblichus' phrase *τῶν ἀποκεκαθαρμένων παντάπασιν ἀνθρώπων* does to some extent mirror Heraclitus' original formulation, then one of the key points might have been in its very vagueness. It seems attractive to entertain the thought that Heraclitus did have a concept of purity which transcends physical purity, but the evidence does not allow us to articulate how this metaphysical purity was conceptualized, if indeed it ever explicitly was.

What of the rest of the fragment? The framing of Heraclitus' quotation in Iamblichus, with its juxtaposition of the material and corporeal offerings on the one hand, and the sacrifices of those who are 'purified completely and in every respect' on the other, represents Iamblichus' specific contribution to a long philosophical debate about the nature and value of sacrifices in terms of service to the gods (*therapeia tōn theōn*).[37] In order to understand Iamblichus' position, it is necessary to briefly recount this debate.

Pythagoras provided, as we argue in the previous chapter, the earliest extant attestation of the idea that purity of soul of those sacrificing is of equal importance as purity of body and clothes. Xenophon's Socrates stresses the importance of the worshippers' inner disposition and posits that life would be unbearable if the sacrifices from the wicked (*poneroi*) were more pleasing to the gods than those from the morally good (*chrestoi*).[38] Plato's lawgiver goes even further and asserts that the gods do not even receive the gifts from those who are bad, because those people are impure (*akathartoi*) in their soul.[39] This claim effectively means that Plato's lawgiver focuses primarily on the inner purity, which directly and decisively determines the nature of one's relationship with the divinities.

Theophrastus offers his own views on ritual purity, which also build on Pythagoras', but are even more radical than Plato's.[40] For Theophrastus, it is possible to perceive the inner purity as a gift in itself. In *On Piety*, Theophrastus states that 'the gods observe more closely the ethos of those sacrificing than the bountifulness (*plethos*) of the offering'.[41] He echoes Pythagoras' statement on purity of the soul when he states that, 'in order to obtain the purity

[36] Kahn 1979: 241–60.

[37] For an overview of philosophers' views of sacrifice from Pythagoras to Theophrastus, Mikalson 2010: 55–83; Rives 2011 provides a historical overview and focuses on Theophrastus and Porphyry.

[38] Xen. *Mem.* 1.3.3. [39] Pl. *Lg.* 4.716e2–717a3.

[40] On Theophrastus' views on the sacrifice, Obbink 1988; Mikalson 2010: 70–9; Rives 2011: 194–6.

[41] Cf. Fr. 7.53–4: *μᾶλλον τὸ δαιμόνιον πρὸς τὸ τῶν θυόντων ἦθος ἢ πρὸς τὸ τῶν θυομένων πλῆθος βλέπει*, with Meijer 1981: 254–5 and Mikalson 2010: 66–7.

of the sacrifices, people think that it is not sufficient to put on bright garments on an impure body. But when they go to sacrifice, making their body sparkling clean together with their garments, yet do not have a soul pure from evils, they think it does not matter.'[42] He also explicitly protests against offerings that resemble a 'gift on contractual basis'.[43] With regard to the preferred types of sacrifice, Theophrastus highlights the value of bloodless offerings.[44] In his view, animal sacrifice is a deviation (*paranomia*): in the beginning, humans offered plants to the gods. In the time of famine, they violated religious correctness (*orthotes*) and sacrificed humans out of necessity. Then they offered animals as substitution for human sacrifice, and got so used to eating animal flesh that they did not revert to the original and correct sacrificial mode even after the famine ceased.[45] Accordingly, humans sacrifice animals to the gods because of their own pleasure, not out of concern for the gods.[46] In Theophrastus' view, the best offering to the gods is a 'pure mind and an undisturbed soul' (*nous katharos kai psyche apathes*), accompanied by true understanding (*dialepsis*) of gods and their affairs.[47]

Theophrastus' views have been transmitted as part of Porphyry's treatise *On Abstinence*.[48] As a Neopythagorean, Porphyry is a passionate advocate of vegetarianism and offers a cosmological explanation of the reason why humans should abstain from killing and sacrificing animals.[49] His views on the nature of divinities, which build on Plato's, are the basis for his theological rejection of blood-sacrifice: the supreme god, the universal ruler, is not material, and should receive silence and pure thoughts as gifts.[50] The intelligible gods

[42] Fr. 9. 3–8 Pötscher: *νῦν δὲ ἐσθῆτα μὲν λαμπρὰν περὶ σῶμα μὴ καθαρὸν ἀμφιεσαμένοις οὐκ ἀρκεῖν νομίζουσιν πρὸς τὸ τῶν θυσιῶν ἁγνόν. ὅταν δὲ τὸ σῶμα μετὰ τῆς ἐσθῆτός τινες λαμπρυνάμενοι μὴ καθαρὰν* (5) *κακῶν τὴν ψυχὴν ἔχοντες ἴωσιν πρὸς τὰς θυσίας, οὐδὲν διαφέρειν νομίζουσιν*. The Pythagorean influence on Theophrastus is significant, as scholars have long noted. Wehrli 1965: 223 even went so far as to propose that *Peri eusebeias* was a dialogue (which is not unlikely) with a Pythagorean as an interlocutor (also possible, but more speculative).

[43] Fr. 8.22–4 with Meijer 1981: 253.

[44] Fr. 19.1–5; 8.1–3.

[45] Fr. 2.50–1; 4.2–3; 6.4–5; 7.1–4; 13.15–40. Theophrastus' stages in development of sacrifice are analysed in Obbink 1988: 274–80.

[46] Fr. 3.21–2; 12.64–83.

[47] Fr. 8.17–21: *πεισθεὶς δὲ ὅτι τούτων χρείαν οὐκ ἔχουσιν οἱ θεοί, εἰς δὲ τὸ ἦθος ἀποβλέπουσι τῶν προσιόντων, μεγίστην θυσίαν λαμβάνοντες τὴν ὀρθὴν περὶ αὐτῶν τε καὶ τῶν πραγμάτων διάληψιν…ἔσται; θεοῖς δὲ ἀρίστη μὲν ἀπαρχὴ νοῦς καθαρὸς* (20) *καὶ ψυχὴ ἀπαθής…*; 'You understand that the gods do not consider the value of these, but rather inspect the ethos of those approaching them, and hold for the greatest sacrifice correct thinking [cf. Meijer 1981: 254] about them and their affairs…? The greatest offering to the gods is a pure mind and a soul free of passions…' There is some doubt whether Pötscher's allocation of the Porphyry's passage to Theophrastus as Fr. 8 is justified; see Meijer 1981: 254–8 and Obbink 1988: 283, who observes that in Theophrastus 'piety…was regarded as dependent upon mental disposition of the worshipper', and Mikalson 2010: 66 with n. 66, who, aware of textual problems, treats the thought as belonging to Theophrastus.

[48] The work is dated to the last decades of the third century AD, see Clark 2000: 5–8.

[49] On Porphyry's views on the sacrifice, Clarke 2001: 39–57; Rives 2011; Townsend 2011.

[50] *Abst.* 2.34.1–2.

should receive hymns.[51] The gods within the heaven should receive fruits of the earth and honey.[52] The only divinities who rejoice in animal sacrifices are the *daimones*, who are at the bottom of the divine hierarchy and can be maleficent.[53] Hence, 'an intelligent, temperate man will be wary of making sacrifices through which he will draw such beings to himself. He will work to purify his soul in every way, for they do not attack a pure soul, because it is unlike them.'[54] Essentially, Porphyry's theology of sacrifice is based on the idea of correspondence between the nature of the god and the type of sacrifice.[55] As there is a divine hierarchy and the sacrificial typology in accordance with it, there is also a classification of humans who offer sacrifices. Simple folk, who are ordinary and unphilosophical, can please divinities with bloodless offerings (grain, barley-cakes, flowers), whereas the philosophers can offer pure thought, unpolluted by the concerns of the body.[56] In addition, Porphyry argues that animals have rational souls, and it is therefore unjust to kill them for any reason, save in self-defence.[57]

Now we can see that Iamblichus' theology of sacrifice is conceptualized as a response to Porphyry's and is a product of a long philosophical debate. Because of his manifold appropriations and recontextualizations of the ideas of previous thinkers, it is all but impossible to gauge the original context of Heraclitus' statement.[58]

Can the philosophical debates about the nature and value of sacrifices tell us something about the popular perception of the significance of inner purity in the sacrificial context? Pythagoras' insistence on purity of soul alongside purity of clothes and the body does not mean that he was the only one, or even the first, to demand that the participants in rituals pay attention to inner purity. He is merely the first author we can identify who uses the word *psyche* to denote the seat of inner purity and stresses its importance in encountering gods and performing rituals. When Xenophon's Socrates

[51] *Abst*. 2.34.12. [52] *Abst*. 2.36.

[53] Porphyry quotes 'certain Platonists' as originators of the idea about the good and bad *daimones*, *Abst.* 2.36.23, see on this Clark 2000: 154 n. 299; Rives 2011: 196.

[54] *Abst.* 2.43.1–5: *διὸ συνετὸς ἀνὴρ καὶ σώφρων εὐλαβηθήσεται τοιαύταις χρῆσθαι θυσίαις, δι' ὧν ἐπισπάσεται πρὸς ἑαυτὸν τοὺς τοιούτους· σπουδάσει δὲ καθαίρειν τὴν ψυχὴν παντοίως· καθαρᾷ γὰρ ψυχῇ οὐκ ἐπιτίθενται διὰ τὸ αὐτοῖς ἀνόμοιον*. Translation: Clark 2000.

[55] Rives 2011: 188–9. [56] *Abst.* 2.34.

[57] *Abst*. 1.19; 3.2; 3.26. On Porphyry's notion of *empsychia*, Karamanolis 2007.

[58] Iamblichus' speaker refers to Heraclitus three more times, but never provides a literal quotation: at 1.11.63–6 (= Fr. B 68 DK) Heraclitus is explicitly mentioned in the context of a discussion of catharsis (which Iamblichus clearly defines in Aristotelian terms), as having labelled actions that tend the soul and free the body 'from its bonds' as 'remedies' (*akea*). Interestingly, the term *apokathairomai* is attested twice in the passage and in contextual connection with Heraclitus' quotation (1.11.52 and 1.11.56); at 3.8.27, a reference to a Heraclitean saying is introduced with 'they say' (*phasi*), without explicit mention of its author (Fr. B 92 DK); at 3.15.21–3 there is a lightly modified, but nevertheless modified, rendering of the famous Fr. B 93 DK, 'the god neither talks nor conceals, but indicates by signs', with explicit attribution to Heraclitus.

speaks about the moral goodness (*chrestos*) of ritual participants as a source of joy for the divinities, he reflects a popular view and does not represent a novel idea.[59]

Plato represents a watershed, since he argues that the proper service of the gods, (*therapeia tōn theōn*) starts with the true, philosophical knowledge and understanding of the nature of divinities.[60] The basis of the true veneration of divinities, and the philosopher's aim in life, is *homoiosis theōi*—an assimilation and approximation to the god, which is obtained by gaining freedom from the physicality as much as possible. He terms this process *catharsis*, and thus redefines it to mean the freeing of the soul from the taint of corporeality.[61] Accordingly, for Plato, the means of purification are truth, self-restraint, justice, courage, and wisdom.[62]

For Plato, *catharsis* has soteriological and eschatological implications, as the goal of a philosopher, according to Socrates, is to purify the soul and approach death in a purified state.[63] In setting such a high standard for the true veneration of the gods, Plato had not only redefined the term catharsis, he has also created a hierarchy of worshippers: the philosophers, the happy few, who are able to gain the true understanding of divinities; and the common people, on the other hand, who do not have the means necessary for achieving such a lofty goal. After Plato, philosophers tend to retain this division, and, as we have seen in Theophrastus, they work out a system of offerings appropriate to each class of humans. Those at the top, the enlightened, offer the soul and the intellect, whereas others give material gifts. Thus, when Theophrastus dismisses the masses, who think that 'it does not matter when they make their body sparkling clean together with their garments, yet do not have a soul pure from evils',[64] he is not implying that they are all completely unaware of the moral dimensions of purity; he rather asserts that they lack specialist, philosophical knowledge about both the essence of the soul and the nature of the divine. The rest of the sentence is illustrative: 'As if the god does not find joy (*charis*) when the most divine part of us, the part that is kindred to them, is pure.'[65] This sentence lays bare the fact that Theophrastus does not deny general moral awareness to the masses; he

[59] Xen. *Mem*. 1.3.3. In fact, Xenophon's Socrates himself acknowledged that the idea is traditional, for according to Xenophon, he 'often quoted with approval' Hesiod's *Op*. 336 as a validation: 'according to your abilities, sacrifice to the immortal gods.'

[60] The literature is vast; for an accessible overview of Plato's theology, Herrmann 2007. We address Plato's views on inner purity and pollution in detail in the second volume. Moulinier 1952: 323–410 provides a comprehensive discussion.

[61] *Phd.*, *passim*; *Cra*. 404a; *R*. 496d, 611c–d; *Lg*. 716e, 777d, 872a; *Sph*. 230e; *Tht.* 177a.

[62] *Phd*. 69b–c.

[63] *Phd*. 65e–69d; 80d–83e, 108a–c; 113d; 114c. On Plato's use of the term *catharsis*, Parker 1983: 281–3.

[64] Fr. 9. 3–7 Pötscher.

[65] Fr. 9. 7–8 Pötscher: *ὥσπερ οὐ τῷ θειοτάτῳ γε τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν χαίροντα μάλιστα τὸν θεὸν διακειμένῳ καθαρῶς, ἅτε συγγενεῖ πεφυκότι*.

rather argues that the common people do not possess knowledge about the nature of the soul, nor about the basic principle which he thinks underpins the human relationship with the divine. His statement cannot be interpreted as a proof that 'the requirement of purity of mind and soul in sacrificial matters developed within and remained within the philosophical tradition', as argued by Mikalson.[66] Theophrastus is following Plato in appropriating and redefining a concept from popular belief to narrow philosophical circles: for him, purity of the soul has a specialist, philosophical implication, and the prerequisite for obtaining purity of soul is knowledge of the divine nature, as well as the nature of the human soul. For the uneducated Greek, this type of knowledge was not accessible, and irrelevant. His own understanding of purity, and of inner purity, would have been different. Ever since Plato, we can observe the philosophical redefinition and appropriation of the notion of inner purity (usually called 'purity of soul'); the term was narrowed down, usually to signify the freeing of the soul from material, corporeal constraints, as we have seen it employed by Theophrastus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus.

Effectively, with Plato we witness a philosophical appropriation of the discourse on inner purity, and the construction of esoteric exclusivity of knowledge and skills necessary to obtain it. By claiming exclusive ownership over the knowledge and skills necessary in order to purify the soul, post-Platonic philosophical discourses insulate the notion of inner purity and attempt to divorce it from its place in the mainstream of Greek religion. This attempt was successful only to some extent, even if the powerful currents of the philosophical tradition tend to overwhelm parallel and preceding discourses on inner purity as attested in other literary genres and inscriptional texts. But as this evidence shows: even if a Greek peasant might not have known just how important noeric gifts might have been to the gods, he did have a personal sense of *dike* and *adikia* and, as we argue, was aware of the importance of inner disposition in the context of ritual practice.

[66] 2010: 67.

4

Empedocles on Inner Pollution and Purity

Release from Suffering, Prayer, and Mental Exercise

Summary: Empedocles, *c.*490–430 BC. Based on his doctrine on transmigration, Empedocles redefines purity as the abstinence from killing, which includes the slaughter and sacrifice of animals. Furthermore, he sees the pursuit of purity as a way for humans to improve their lot in the next incarnation and to eventually regain divine status. We discuss fragments B 112; 115; 126; 127; 128; 136; 137 DK in which the narrator relates that he, once a god, was demoted to a *daimon* and treated as polluted by all elements because he had committed murder and broken an oath, but when he reached the end of his grievous 30,000-year-long cycle of changes into various forms on earth he became a poet, prophet, healer, and leader, and finally he again reached the level of a god. Empedocles had witnessed the reign of Aphrodite (Fr. B 128 DK), when bloodless offerings, the only religiously correct sacrifices, were made. He claims that humans have since forgotten that, because of transmigration, every killing is murder and that, as the act of murder incurs the gravest pollution, they are polluted and polluting themselves even when they think they are performing religiously correct acts such as sacrifice (Fr. B 137 DK). Empedocles infers that, now that they have been enlightened, humans must change their lifestyle and their religious practices. Empedocles' striking reinterpretation of pollution beliefs relates that the inner, daemonic part of living creatures is in a permanent state of pollution. This pollution, which Empedocles labels *kakotes* (Frs. B 144 and 145 DK) has a strong moral element.

We also interpret Empedocles' prayer to the Muse (Fr. B 3 DK) as a request for the purification of epic poetry, in which the narrator's mind and mouth are ritually purified by the gods and thus rendered capable of serving as a medium for the Muse to transmit a religiously correct message. Finally, we read Fr. B 110 DK as the request for obtaining and maintaining inner purity as a prerequisite for correct thinking about the gods and the world.

The works of the natural philosopher and poet Empedocles, from Acragas in Sicily (traditionally dated to *c.*490–430 BC), exhibit a keen interest in purity: indeed, he is credited with a hexameter treatise called *Purifications* (*Καθαρμοί*).

Several names were associated with works entitled *Purifications* in antiquity; among these, the fragments of Empedocles' work are the longest and most detailed which survive.[1] Empedocles appears to have authored a second treatise in hexameters entitled *On Nature* (*Περὶ Φύσεως*): Diogenes Laertius mentions both titles, *Purifications* and *On Nature*, and remarks that their combined length amounted to a total of 5,000 verses.[2] While some scholars argue for the unity of these two treatises and posit that all extant Empedoclean fragments belong to one and the same poem,[3] others insist on the existence of two distinct and separate works.[4] The current scholarly consensus is that the extant fragments share common features and are, by and large, coherent:[5] passages traditionally associated with both poems express Empedocles' interest in purity and pollution, and they share the same doctrine of transmigration. For the purposes of our analysis, therefore, it is not vital to resolve whether we are dealing with one book or two, and the exact apportioning of fragments to one poem or the other is irrelevant for the issue under examination: it is methodologically sound to treat *Purifications* and *On Nature* as intrinsically coherent.

We focus on the passages which throw more light on Empedocles' doctrine of purity and purification and on those which outline his principle of

[1] On *Purifications* as a literary genre, Sedley 1998: 4–7. This title is also associated with Epimenides the Cretan (Diels–Kranz 3 A 2–3); apart from the title, no information is available on the context. Epimenides was famed as a wandering purifier who lent his expertise to the Athenians when their city suffered from a plague (Parker 1983: 209–10). A scholion to Aristophanes' *Frogs* (on 1033) attributes a work entitled *Purifications* to the legendary poet Musaeus. Sedley points out (1998: 5 n. 17) that in Pl. *R.* 364e–365a Adeimantus mentions books of Musaeus and Orpheus, which were used for performances of *luseis* and *katharmoi* of the wrongs done by the living and the dead.

[2] D.L. 8.77. The figure seems misleading; on this Osborne 1987: 28–9.

[3] Until Stein's 1852 edition, all of the Empedoclean fragments were assigned to a single poem. Stein separated them into *Purifications*, fragments dealing with religious issues, and *On Nature*, fragments covering physical issues. Osborne 1987 argues that Empedocles composed one poem on nature, which most ancient authorities referred to as *Purifications* and which some called *On Nature*: her important contribution is an attempt to interpret all the Empedoclean fragments as a coherent whole, by taking Fr. B 115 DK and its contents as expressing their fundamental theme. She asserts that Empedocles was primarily concerned with moral and religious issues; Inwood 2001: 8–21 and Janko 2005 support this view.

[4] Riedweg 1995 corroborates the views of Kahn 1960: 6–8 regarding *On Nature*, and maintains that, since two types of addressees are attested in the fragments, they belong to two separate books. Riedweg argues against Osborne's thesis (1987) for unity: he maintains that there were two poems, both religious in nature. Sedley 1998: 3–7 and Bollack 2005 also argue against the hypothesis of a single work. Sedley 1998: 2–10 advances the view that Empedocles composed two different but doctrinally coherent poems. He argues against earlier scholarship, which tends to ascribe the 'natural' fragments to *On Nature*, and the 'religious' to *Purifications*, stating (p. 8): 'Given the improbability that any ancient reader of Empedocles might have expected the physical poem and the *Katharmoi* to conflict doctrinally, the provenance of the lines will have mattered less to those who cited them than their value as evidence for Empedocles' views…'

[5] The discovery and subsequent edition of the Strasburg papyrus in 1999 corroborates this assumption; for the latest brief overview of the problem, Trépanier 2014: 173–5.

transmigration, a concept akin to theories of metempsychosis.[6] The latter are important for the issue of purity because Empedocles presents the killing of both men and animals as the greatest source of pollution (*mysos*) and as the reason for the grievous cycle of reincarnations. Moral concerns are at the core of Empedocles' conceptualization of purity, which he redefines as the abstinence from killing, including the slaughter and sacrifice of animals. Furthermore, he sees the pursuit of purity in this manner as a way for humans to improve their lot in their next incarnations and to ultimately recover their divine nature. Finally, we will discuss the passage which requests the inner purity of the recipient and transmitter of divine message.

Firstly, however, we must consider the relationship between religious and philosophical threads in Empedocles' poetry, the nature of the audiences which his work assumes, and how these guide our present approach to the fragments. We are primarily interested in the religious and socio-cultural implications of his poetry; detailed discussion of Empedocles' natural philosophy matters less for our present concerns. Nevertheless, our interpretations do not aim to ignore the philosophical readings of these poems. There is no doubt that ancient recipients of Empedocles' works had already developed sophisticated hermeneutic instruments in order to interpret his doctrines as a coherent philosophical system, and this is certainly a strong enough validation for modern philosophical approaches, including allegorical readings.[7]

Indeed, the extant fragments testify that Empedocles himself envisaged two types of audience for his work, as they have two sets of addressees: sometimes he addresses a plural 'you', sometimes a singular. The plural 'you' is identified as the citizens of Acragas in Fr. B 112 DK, the singular as his disciple Pausanias in Fr. B 1 DK.[8] The broad audiences would primarily be interested in the proper way of life and the means of obtaining purity, whereas the more specialized account of the *kosmos* and its workings would constitute material for intensive study. Empedocles promises rewards for

[6] For a clear outline of distinctive features of Empedocles' theory of transmigration, which was conceptualized as metempsychosis at various stages of its historical reception, and for an overview of its critique by later thinkers, see Inwood 2009.

[7] The poetic language and imagery Empedocles uses render it extremely difficult to discern which elements in his fragments are allegories and which constitute his statements about the origins of the world and of nature. Additional difficulties are caused by the names he uses for what seem to be identical or similar forces: for instance, he designates 'love' by Philotes, Gethosyne, Aphrodite, Harmonia, and Cypris. On Empedocles' poetic language, Most 1999 and 2007: 284–92; Nünlist 2005. On theological allegory in Empedocles, Primavesi 2005 and 2006.

[8] Passages from Empedocles are cited by the Diels–Kranz numbering. Our outline of Empedocles' addressees is based on Curd 2005, who provides a detailed and persuasive analysis of the two types of audience and the two types of knowledge (the 'exoteric' and the 'esoteric') presented in Empedocles' extant fragments. The doctrine underpinning both types of knowledge is one and the same. She concludes 2005: 150: 'The natural philosophy and the religion are linked because a mistaken view about the cosmos can lead to impiety.'

both groups: purifications, relief from illness, and a path leading to success for the general audiences, outlined in Fr. B 112 DK; a set of extraordinary powers far surpassing those of mortal men—which Fr. B 111 DK enumerates—to the singular 'you' who will gain a complete understanding of Empedocles' doctrines about the working of the *kosmos*.[9] His 'esoteric teachings' instruct on the 'first principles' (earth, fire, air, and water), the two forces (love and strife), and the nature of the *kosmos* and its cycles. This type of knowledge leads to an understanding of the workings of the world on a profound level, and is reserved for those select men who qualify to be teachers, leaders, prophets, and healers—men like his wise disciple, Pausanias.

The elements of interest for Empedocles' general audience are the story about the *daimon*'s (δαίμων) demotion and separation from the gods (θεοί);[10] the assertions about the various past lives of the *daimon*—Empedocles' theory of transmigration; the debunking of the sacrificial ritual and the related revelation of the horrific implications of animal slaughter; the commands to refrain from blood-sacrifice; the dietary rules; and the directives about sexual practices. The general audience did not need to understand the cosmological and theoretical underpinnings of Empedocles' rules of purity, but it was vital that they understood that animal slaughter is murder, and that they must abandon the spilling of blood. In order to compel his contemporaries to abstain from animal sacrifice, the central religious ritual of the Greeks, Empedocles needed to present some very persuasive arguments.

For that reason, let us first assume the role of the historical recipients of his poems in the fifth century BC in order to explain the ways they could have understood his oeuvre from the background of traditional religion. The citizens of Acragas, as well as audiences in other Greek cities, experienced Empedocles' hexametric poetry in performance, just like any other epic poem of the time.[11] Furthermore, they would have received Empedocles' verses with ears accustomed to the language of traditional myth and ritual: the traditional formulations, references, and allusions reveal Empedocles' attempts to meet his audience's expectations. How, then, could historical audiences have received Empedocles' striking and radical interpretation of correct religious thinking and behaviour?

[9] Riedweg 1995: 57–9 also stresses that the special knowledge was meant for Pausanias alone.

[10] It is important to stress right away that we consider the two entities to be distinct from one another, both ontologically and morally. In our view, Empedocles employs the term *daimon* to designate a liminal entity that is both ontologically and morally inferior to a *theos*, an entity which has been demoted from a *theos* through exile, and which is nevertheless capable of regaining this divine status. The status of a *daimon* resembles that of an exiled murderer or a scapegoat in the historical reality of Greek communities. See this chapter, pp. 86–8.

[11] Fr. B 112 DK, vv. 7–12 suggest that Empedocles performed his verses in several cities. On the tradition regarding the pan-Hellenic reach of his poetry, Wright 1995: 16–17.

In the fragment which is traditionally perceived as the proem of the *Purifications*,[12] the poetic persona of Empedocles addresses the citizens of his home-town Acragas with the following words (B 112 DK):

> *ὦ φίλοι, οἳ μέγα ἄστυ κατὰ ξανθοῦ Ἀκράγαντος*
> *ναίετ' ἀν' ἄκρα πόλεος, ἀγαθῶν μελεδήμονες ἔργων,*
> *ξείνων αἰδοῖοι λιμένες, κακότητος ἄπειροι,*
> *χαίρετ'· ἐγὼ δ' ὑμῖν θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός*
> *πωλεῦμαι μετὰ πᾶσι τετιμένος, ὥσπερ ἔοικα,* (5)
> *ταινίαις τε περίστεπτος στέφεσίν τε θαλείοις.*
> *τοῖσιν † ἅμ' † ἂν ἵκωμαι ἄστεα τηλεθάοντα,*
> *ἀνδράσιν ἠδὲ γυναιξί, σεβίζομαι· οἱ δ' ἅμ' ἕπονται*
> *μυρίοι ἐξερέοντες, ὅπῃ πρὸς κέρδος ἀταρπός,*
> *οἱ μὲν μαντοσυνέων κεχρημένοι, οἱ δ' ἐπὶ νούσων* (10)
> *παντοίων ἐπύθοντο κλυεῖν εὐηκέα βάξιν,*
> *δηρὸν δὴ χαλεπῇσι πεπαρμένοι <ἀμφ' ὀδύνῃσιν>.*
>
> Friends, you who live in the great city by the yellow river Acragas,
> up in the city's citadel, mindful of good deeds,
> welcoming harbours for foreigners, inexperienced in evil,
> I salute you. I go about you as an immortal god, not mortal any more,
> honoured by all, as is appropriate for me,
> wreathed with ribbons and crowned with flowery garlands.
> Whenever I arrive at prosperous cities,
> I am revered by men and women. And they follow me,
> in their thousands, inquiring: 'Which path leads to success?'
> Some are in need of divinations, others ask to hear
> an utterance that brings good healing from all sorts of diseases,
> since they have long been pierced through by grave ailments.

In the opening lines of the poem, Empedocles praises his home-town and focuses especially on the piety of its citizens. The citizens are pictured first as striving for good things themselves (v. 2), and then as conferring good things on others since they are 'welcoming harbours for foreigners' (v. 3). With this phrase, we suggest, Empedocles particularly extols the willingness of the citizens of Acragas to accept suppliants—citizens of other regions in need of protection—which is also a religiously correct thing to do. The closing statement of the third line reinforces their excellent character, as they are 'inexperienced in evil'. After depicting their qualities in this way, Empedocles introduces himself as a god rather than human (v. 4). His divine presence elicits an enthusiastic response: he is 'revered by all' (both *τετιμένος* (v. 5) and *σεβίζομαι* (v. 8) carry strong religious connotations) 'as is suitable' (v. 5). This is not only the case in his hometown: in fact, wherever he appears,

[12] For a discussion of the proem to *Purifications*, see Rashed 2008.

Empedocles is received with the same reverence and admiration (σεβίζομαι, v. 8). These lines establish a relationship of reciprocal beneficial exchange: Empedocles is revered by everyone everywhere, thousands follow him, and he deserves this respect since he offers divination, prosperity, and a cure for manifold difficult diseases (vv. 8–12). This is typical of how the Greeks qualified their relationship with the divinities, and here underlines Empedocles' self-representation as a god. It has long been recognized that Empedocles' self-stylization resembles the *iatromanteis*-charlatans as they are represented in the Hippocratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease*.[13] It has also frequently been pointed out that this passage bears a striking resemblance to Plato's depiction of the *orpheotelestai*, 'Orphic' religious experts. It is in Plato that we read that such people were capable of persuading not just individuals but whole cities of their ability to cure and ward off evils. Christoph Riedweg points out that the wandering specialists mentioned by Plato claimed divine descent and a special, privileged knowledge; however, they did not assert their own divinity.[14] The 'Orphic' gold tablets also testify that the 'Orphic' doctrine on the soul propounded the view that the connection between the human soul and the divine race was very close, and that the immortal human soul, once initiated and purified, could even claim divine origin.[15] This, however, pertains to the souls of the dead, not those still living. Empedocles may have been influenced by 'Orphic' doctrines; he differs from these, however, in that he surpasses the claims of *orpheotelestai* and presents himself not only as a privileged religious expert but as a fully fledged divinity.[16] This is in keeping with his ideas about human life and the transmigration of *daimones*, as we will see shortly.

Empedocles' striking claim to divinity, his hint that the citizens of Acragas are welcoming to exiles and suppliants, and his description of the citizens as 'inexperienced in evil' gain a new dimension when read in light of the passage in which he lays down his doctrine of the banishment of the *daimones* and the reasons for transmigration. This passage was most likely positioned early in the poem,[17] and it encapsulates the core of Empedocles' principles of transmigration, miasma, and purification (Fr. B 115 DK):

[13] Parker 1983: 208–9, with references.

[14] Pl. *R.* 364b5 ff. See Ch.12, p. 258 for text and translation. On the term *orpheotelestes*, see Ch.12, p. 254. The similarity was noted already by Kern 1888: 505, and mentioned by Kranz 1935: 108–9 and Guthrie 1952: 231. Riedweg 1995 provides a thorough analysis and argues for the manifold influence of 'Orphic' doctrines on both *On Nature* and the *Katharmoi*.

[15] See Ch. 12.

[16] Indeed, we can even see Empedocles as going further, and as presenting himself as a walking temple: instead of people having to travel to a sanctuary to encounter a powerful divinity, Empedocles comes to their cities, adorned with ribbons and wreathed, and immediately identifiable as a deity.

[17] Plu. *De Exil.* 607c quotes Fr. B 115 DK, stating: 'At the beginning of his philosophy, Empedocles first says…' (ὁ δ' Ἐ. ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς φιλοσοφίας προαναφωνήσας…). Sedley 1998 proposes that the passage comes from the beginning of *On Nature* and argues against its traditional ascription to *Purifications*: since most of the extant fragments are not attributed to one

ἔστιν Ἀνάγκης χρῆμα, θεῶν ψήφισμα παλαιόν,
ἀίδιον, πλατέεσσι κατεσφρηγισμένον ὅρκοις·
εὖτέ τις ἀμπλακίῃσι φόνῳ[18] φίλα γυῖα μιήνῃ,
<νείκεΐ θ'[19]> ὅς κ(ε) ἐπίορκον ἁμαρτήσας ἐπομόσσῃ, (4)
δαίμονες οἵτε μακραίωνος λελάχασι βίοιο,
τρίς μιν μυρίας ὥρας ἀπὸ μακάρων ἀλάλησθαι,
φυομένους παντοῖα διὰ χρόνου εἴδεα θνητῶν
ἀργαλέας βιότοιο μεταλλάσσοντα κελεύθους. (8)
αἰθέριον μὲν γάρ σφε μένος πόντονδε διώκει,
πόντος δ' ἐς χθονὸς οὖδας ἀπέπτυσε, γαῖα δ' ἐς αὐγὰς
ἠελίου φαέθοντος, ὁ δ' αἰθέρος ἔμβαλε δίναις·
ἄλλος δ' ἐξ ἄλλου δέχεται, στυγέουσι δὲ πάντες. (12)
τῶν καὶ ἐγὼ νῦν εἰμι, φυγὰς θεόθεν καὶ ἀλήτης,
νείκεϊ μαινομένῳ πίσυνος.

There is an oracle of Necessity, an ancient decree of the gods,
everlasting, sealed by broad oaths:
as soon as someone,[20] led by errors of his mind,[21] defiles
his limbs with bloodshed,
<in strife>, whoever made false the oath he swore,
these *daimones* who have been allotted a long life,
three times ten thousand seasons roam away from the blessed,
over time becoming all sorts of mortal forms,
exchanging one grievous way of life after another.
For the force of the ether chases them out into the sea,
and the sea spat them out to the surface of the soil, and the
earth into the rays

or the other poem by ancient authorities, modern editors have apportioned them in accordance with what they think might be suitable for a work of natural philosophy or a work containing religious doctrine. This thinking is flawed, however, since fragments of a distinctly 'religious' character can be associated with the physical work as well. Sedley 1998: 3–10 demonstrates this clearly in his discussion of Fr. B 115 DK: 'without the straitjacket of the old prejudice that science and religion don't mix…the most natural interpretation is that B 115 comes from a poem in which Empedocles classed himself as a fallen daimōn still working through its long cycle of transmigrations, whereas in the *Katharmoi*, opening as it does with his confident self-proclamation as a god…he presented himself as having now completed the cycle and recovered his divinity' (p. 10). For an overview of the apportioning of the fragments and of ancient and modern interpretations of this passage, see Wright 1995: 270–2.

[18] The reading *φόνῳ* is accepted by most editors and by the vast majority of scholars, and it is confirmed by Plu. *Es. Carn*. 996b, in a passage where the incarnations of the Empedoclean *daimon* are clearly described as a punishment for bloodshed; the manuscript reading *φόβῳ* is found in Plutarch (Plu. *De Exil*. 607c–d, and corrected by Stephanus in 1572 to *φόνῳ*); it is followed by Wright 1995 and Barnes 1987: 194. On textual issues relating to this line, see Primavesi 2006: 52–3.

[19] The reading in line 4 follows DK; Wright 1995 prints *ὅρκον ὅτις κ'*; van der Ben, *ὅς κεν ⟨τὴν⟩*…; Gallavotti, *⟨ἔστι τόδ'·⟩*; Zuntz deletes the line altogether; Inwood 2001 puts *ὃς καὶ* between *cruces desperationis*.

[20] We take v. 3 to concern one of the gods: *εὖτέ τις* is, in our view, picking up on the plural gods from v. 1: *θεῶν*.

[21] On the meaning of *amplakia*, see n. 31.

> of the blazing sun, and the sun again to the whirlwind of the ether.
> The one takes them from the other, but everyone abhors them.
> Now I am one of these, an exile from the gods and a roamer,
> having relied on mad strife.

Empedocles explains that some, or even all, life forms on earth are *daimones*. Once, *daimones* had been gods (*theoi*); they became *daimones* because they killed and broke oaths (vv. 3–4). This crime resulted in the expulsion of the *daimones* from the gods' community (ἀπὸ μακάρων, v. 6),[22] and doomed them to repeated incarnations in mortal forms. Empedocles highlights the seriousness of their crime by first focusing on the divinely ordained constrains and coercive measures that had been implemented to prevent it: he states that the oracle is one of Necessity, and then describes it as a decree (*psephisma*) by the gods (v. 1) which is both 'everlasting' (v. 2) and 'ancient' (v. 1); he concludes that the decree was 'sealed' by 'broad oaths' (v. 2), and only then elaborates on what the crime itself entailed.

The labels Empedocles uses are revealing, as they specify the sources of authority for the most important governing forces and regulations ordering the religious and social life of Greek communities—*chrema* is an oracle, and *psephisma* is a decree. Civic and divine authorities were intertwined in formulating regulations on the most important issues for preserving a community's fibre. Pressing circumstances—here, Necessity—could lead to the consultation of an oracle; an oracular response given to a community could be reinforced by the civic authority in the form of a formal decision, *psephisma*.[23] By employing this terminology here, Empedocles attributes to the divine world processes and procedures which were familiar to the Greeks from their political life: the gods (*theoi*), too, must adhere to this oracle and to the communal decision if they are to remain gods. In order to show that the oracle and the decision are still in effect, Empedocles uses the present tense 'There *is* an oracle of Necessity' (v. 1).[24]

Necessity, oracles, and decrees all affect the community as a whole. When we move on to oaths (ὅρκοι, v. 2), we shift to the level of the individual. By laying down an oath, each individual member of a community weaves his or her thread into its fibre, committing themselves to the civic decision (*psephisma*) and to the oracle (*chrema*). In Greek society, swearing an oath was more than a simple promise or assurance: it was a solemn religious

[22] This is reinforced by the reference to φυγὰς θεόθεν in v. 13.

[23] For an example of the process of oracular consultation leading to an issue of a *psephisma* in the mid-fifth century BC, Ostwald 1986: 145–8.

[24] Osborne 1987: 46–8, followed by Inwood 2001: 60–1, offers a different interpretation of the lines: her analysis is based on the esoteric, cosmological interpretation, and is allegorical. Our interpretation attempts to understand Empedocles' discourse and ideas in their socio-political context, and our fundamental question is: what would the citizens of Acragas understand by the terms Empedocles uses in Fr. B 115 DK, especially ὅρκος and ψήφισμα?

ritual, in which the gods were invoked as witnesses and sacrifices were made, and one which was perceived as holding society together.[25] The content of the oath is reported in verses 3–8. According to a religious reading of the fragment, the object of the oath is, or must at least include, the avoidance of murder (*phonos*, v. 3). Murder is mentioned immediately after 'broad oaths' (v. 2), and is followed by a reference to 'false swearing' (*epiorkon*, v. 4):[26] it is a natural inference, therefore, that it is *phonos* which causes an oath to become *to epiorkon*.

In historical reality, oaths typically contained curses (*ἀραί*) against perjurers.[27] Mirroring this, Empedocles' verses 4–8, in our view, represent a catalogue of such inflictions set out for the accursed perjurer: he becomes a *daimon* instead of a *theos*; he is expelled from the gods' company; he is to roam for 30,000 years, taking the shapes of living organisms; his way of life is a constant change from one wretched form into another.

As an oath was a sacred act, any violation of it incurred metaphysical pollution and divine persecution.[28] When an oath was violated, an *agos*, the sanction for a curse, came upon the perpetrators, which is why an accursed individual is denoted in Greek by the adjective *enages*.[29] In Empedocles, breaking the oath incurs an ontological demotion to a *daimon*, who is, as we outline below, treated as polluted by all elements. In addition, the act which

[25] Lycurg. *Leocr*. 79. On the sanctity of oaths and the sacrilege of breaking an oath, Parker 1983: 186–8.

[26] The wording *ὅς κ(ε) ἐπίορκον ἁμαρτήσας ἐπομόσσῃ* suggests that the breach of one clause of an oath makes one a perjurer of the entire oath. *πλατέεσσι κατεσφρηγισμένον ὅρκοις* is ambiguous—it might imply metaphorically, as LSJ, s.v. *πλατύς* A. 5 suggests, 'a broad strong oath', an interpretation corroborated by the list of curses following v. 4. It might also denote a broad oath in the sense of an oath laid down by all the *theoi*; cf. Fr. B 30.3 DK. Inwood 2001: 60, on the other hand, argues that 'the oracle of necessity, determined and sealed by an ancient decree and "broad oaths," is most likely an oath which regulates the entire cycle and in particular determines when love and strife begin to take their turns at dominance in world' (with reference to Fr. B 30.3 DK). It is uncommon for oracles to *give out* oaths (the authors know of no such historical example). There are, however, instances of an oracle *confirming* an oath suggested by a citizen to a community. At any rate, Inwood's interpretation allows for the act of killing to be included in the subject-matter of the oath. Osborne 2005: 290, coming from a very particular position on the primordial state, observes that '[i]t is slightly unclear what oaths are being broken…', but concedes that 'the guilty agent in Empedocles B 115 deserves the punishment, exile, for a murder that pollutes the whole community of daimōnes'. Primavesi 2006, starting from a critique of the (post-Classical) form *ἁμαρτήσας*, rejects all of v. 4, and views murder as the only transgression.

[27] The form of an oath which contains a curse in case of perjury was widespread in the ancient world, see Faraone 1993; 2005, and West 1999. One of the famous Greek examples was the great oath of the Theran settlers of Cyrene, epigraphically transmitted (GHI No. 5). For a recent discussion, Gagné 2013: 171–2.

[28] Parker 1983: 186–8 notes that perjury is the first offence for which post-mortem punishment is attested (H. *Il*. 3.278–9 and 19.259–60). Breaking an oath could also result in a divine wrath so intense that it extended to more than one generation. On the oath and ancestral fault in early Greek poetry, Gagné 2013: 179–205. On foreswearing and pollution, see 'Metaphysical Pollutions' in the Introduction chapter (pp. 29–32).

[29] Parker 1983: 5–7; 191; see 'Metaphysical Pollutions' in the Introduction chapter (pp. 29–32).

constitutes the violation of the oath—murder—incurs pollution, which is physical. Verse 3 states this clearly: ἀμπλακίῃσι φόνῳ φίλα[30] γυῖα μιήνῃ—*phonos* pollutes the body of the perpetrator. ἀμπλακίῃσι, here employed as a dative of reason, further qualifies murder as a consequence of an intentional error of the self.[31] Hence, murder is established here as representing both a physical pollution and a mental transgression: physical, because of spilling of blood; mental, because it involves premeditation.

By presenting *amplakia* (ἀμπλακία) as a trigger of murder and oath-breaking, Empedocles highlights that both crimes represent intentional actions which stem from wrong mental disposition. This is reinforced at the end of the fragment, where Empedocles admits his own responsibility for his wrongdoing—he committed the act 'having relied on mad strife' (v. 14). Since all the gods swore the oath and brought about the decree, all of them are familiar with the terms and with the punishments in store for those who commit murder and violate the oath. Empedocles thus elevates to the divine sphere the crimes which were familiar to his listeners as the most abhorrent.[32] His novel idea is that even the gods are susceptible to pollution, and

[30] φίλος is here used in the sense of 'his/her own', as frequently attested in Homer and in early Greek poets, especially when applied to limbs.

[31] In early poetry the term *amplakia* is regularly associated with an error of mind or error of judgment, 'l'erreurs de l' esprit', as Saïd 1978: 94 labelled it. In Pindar, for instance, *amplakia* can arise from *phrenes* (cf. *Pyth*. 3.13) or is closely associated with the *phrenes*. Furthermore, *amplakia* is often associated with murder, and conceptualized as a source of pollution (so already Gernet 1917: 35–40 refers to it as (p. 39) 'principe de souillure', stressing that 'le mot concerne les délits religieux'): in *Ol*. 7. 24–6, before Pindar mentions the murder of Likymnios, he states that 'around people's *phrenes* hang countless *amplakiai*', thus signifying the murderous intent. In *Pyth*. 2, Ixion's murder of a guest, his own father-in-law (the mythological narrative of the first blood-spilling among humans aggravated by the breach of *xenia*, the ritualized guest-friendship), and his subsequent insolence towards Zeus, his benefactor and host (an attempt to violate Hera), are designated as *amplakiai* (vv. 30–4): αἱ δύο δ' ἀμπλακίαι φερέπονοι τελέθοντι· τὸ μὲν ἥρως ὅτι ἐμφύλιον αἷμα πρώτιστος… ἐπέμειξε θνατοῖς, ὅτι… ἔν ποτε θαλάμοις Διὸς ἄκοιτιν ἐπειρᾶτο, 'but there are two *amplakiai* which carry suffering: one, for he was the very first hero who mixed [*sc*. stained]… mortals with kindred blood, and the other, for he once tried to violate Zeus' wife with his advances in their marital chambers'. Ancient lexicographers gloss *amplakia* as synonymous to *hamartia*; see Bremer 1969: 112–17, and Sullivan 1982 on Pindar's use of the term, with older literature (p. 217 n. 12). In the *Theognidea* v. 204 *amplakia* is associated with perjury and intentional transgressions which result in divine punishment, see Ch. 6, p. 122.

[32] Wright 1995: 63–9 notes that Empedocles picks the two greatest and most polluting crimes in Greek society—murder and swearing falsely—and attributes them to the *daimon*. He also notes that the oath-breaker and the murderer were presented as abhorrent to the elements, but he does not discuss the wording of the passage in detail, nor does he present the treatment of the *daimon*'s earthly manifestations as similar to scapegoat rituals and to the disposal of *lymata*. He argues (p. 69) that, 'although the daimon has come under the power of Strife and so is said to have "done" a wrong act, this need not imply wrong intention or power of choice on the part of the daimon; Strife "had" to take control'. We differ in this respect and agree with Osborne 1987: 36, who argues that the *daimon*'s sin (murder and breaking an oath) is an entirely voluntary action. Osborne 2005 revisits and reasserts this position, and argues (p. 297) that Empedocles 'set the cosmic events within a moral structure, one in which the fall from unity was the effect of violence in heaven'. Bloodshed in Fr. B 115 DK is a voluntary deed

that, for them, miasma results not only in an expulsion but also in an ontological demotion.

Once on earth, the *daimon* not only leads a woeful existence, changing from one living being into another, but he is also represented as being abhorrent to the very elements. The language Empedocles uses to express the way in which all the elements (aether, sea, soil, sun, vv. 9–11) expel this *daimon* bears a strong resemblance to the treatment of scapegoats and of other elements of pollution in Greek society. The *daimon* is 'expelled', 'chased out' (v. 9: διώκει). In Greek ritual, the expulsion of a scapegoat was performed to purify a city: one person was made to embody all that was polluting a community and was then chased away.[33] In other forms of purification, the pollutant, *lyma* (λῦμα), was either dissolved through contact with a pure matter, such as fire or water, or transferred onto absorbent substances which were then disposed of. In such cases, λῦμα was cast away as far as possible—the usual methods included casting it into the sea (ἐμβάλλω, cf. v. 11 ἔμβαλε) or burying it in the earth.[34] Even spitting (ἀποπτύω, cf. v. 10 ἀπέπτυσε) is attested as an attempt to avert pollution: murderers would spit out their victim's blood as an attempt to ward off the victim's revenge.[35] The *daimon* is treated as λῦμα in all its incarnations—all the elements expel him, all abhor him. As all forms of life are *daimones*, as Empedocles asserts, his striking and horrifying language here suggests that all life on earth is pollution.

Can we identify the seat of this pollution? Empedocles' arresting depiction of the banishment of murderous *daimones* was already much discussed in antiquity. Many ancient authors who quote this passage understood the *daimon* as a soul (ψυχή).[36] Plutarch, for instance, notes that: 'Empedocles reveals that not just he himself, but all of us, from himself on, are wanderers here, strangers, and exiles', and that 'the profoundest truth is that the soul is in exile and wanders, being driven by divine decrees and laws'.[37] Are we to interpret, as the ancients did, Empedocles' story as an allegory in which the banished *daimon* is the soul? Does his account apply to all living things on earth, or only to some? The discussions of these problems, both ancient and

and morally reprehensible, since (p. 290) 'it involves some kind of offence against a code of conduct that is morally binding, something to which the agent has previously bound himself in some explicit way'.

[33] For scapegoat rituals as a means of purifying the city, Parker 1983: 258–60 and Bremmer 1983*a*.

[34] On treating *lymata*, Parker 1983: 229–30. The passage from the Hippocratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease* is especially illustrative regarding the treatment of *lymata*: 'They bury some of them in the ground, they throw some in the sea, and others they carry off to the mountains where nobody can touch or tread upon them' (Morb. 1.100–2).

[35] Rohde 1925: 180–2 and 582–6. Testimonies: Aesch. Fr. 122a; 354.

[36] Plutarch, Hippolytus, Philoponus, Asclepius, and Plotinus, who quote the lines in full or partially, interpret the tribulations of the *daimon* as a discourse on the soul; on this see Wright 1995: 270–2.

[37] Plu. *De Exil*. 607c–e.

modern, reflect the sheer difficulty of articulating the precise ways in which Empedocles' doctrine about earthly life relates to his cosmology. What seems certain, however, is that, according to Empedocles' doctrine, the identity of a *daimon* stays the same though the physical form (*μορφή*) changes;[38] he also postulates that the mortal body is merely a cloak for the *daimon*.[39] It is, unfortunately, unclear exactly what Empedocles himself had in mind when he used the word *daimon*,[40] though we can be certain that it was not the physical forms it took. On any interpretation, it has to be the inner and the transcendent part of the living being that is represented as polluted. Furthermore, Empedocles departs from traditional Greek religion in representing inner pollution as a *permanent* state. How, then, can a human be purified? Empedocles represents his own personal history as paradigmatic of the path to purification and, relatedly, to ontological promotion.

In the closing lines of Fr. B 115 DK, Empedocles identifies himself as one of the *daimones*, 'an exile from the gods and a roamer' (v. 13), a demoted god stained by murder. Conversely, the speaker of Fr. B 112 DK is the 'advanced' or 'upgraded' Empedocles who, having abstained from every kind of murder, reattained his divine nature, which is the reason why he presents himself as a god. Even though he portrays human life as essentially polluted and torturous, there is still hope: his doctrine provides the means of purification. By obtaining knowledge about their divine origins, and by avoiding the pollution of murder—and all killing is murder, if the *daimon* can inhabit all living things—humans can hope to achieve a better lot in the next form and eventually regain, like Empedocles himself, their divine status.[41]

Empedocles relates his ontological progression from a *daimon* to a god in the following way: when he realized the nature of the world he had come to inhabit, he was horrified (Fr. B 118 DK); he describes how he had been a boy, a girl, a fish in the sea, and a bush in his past lives (Fr. B 117 DK); and he maintains that the whole human race is wretched (Fr. B 124 DK). He explains that, once upon a time, humans had lived a vegetarian life under the auspices of Aphrodite, and they had offered only paintings, perfumes, and bloodless offerings to the goddess (Fr. B 128 DK). Significantly, he qualifies such gifts as *eusebeis*, 'properly respectful of the gods'.[42] Here is Fr. B 128 DK in full:

> *οὐδέ τις ἦν κείνοισιν Ἄρης θεὸς οὐδὲ Κυδοιμός*
> *οὐδὲ Ζεὺς βασιλεὺς οὐδὲ Κρόνος οὐδὲ Ποσειδῶν,*

[38] Fr. B 137 DK. [39] Fr. B 126 DK.

[40] For an overview of suggested identities for Empedoclean '*daimones*' (souls, Hesiodic *daimon*, and Homeric *daimon*), see Primavesi 2006: 54–6 and Trépanier 2014.

[41] This might imply a demand of vegetarianism, since the consumption of plant products was not considered killing: plants are understood to *offer* fruit of themselves, so humans do not take them by force. This is Theophrastus' explanation as related by Porphyry; on this see Obbink 1988.

[42] We use Mikalson's 2010: 9 translation of *eusebeia*.

ἀλλὰ Κύπρις βασίλεια.
τὴν οἵ γ' εὐσεβέεσσιν ἀγάλμασιν ἱλάσκοντο
γραπτοῖς τε ζῴοισι μύροισί τε δαιδαλεόδμοις (5)
σμύρνης τ' ἀκρήτου θυσίαις λιβάνου τε θυώδους,
ξανθῶν τε σπονδὰς μελίτων ῥίπτοντες ἐς οὐδας·
ταύρων δ' ἀκρήτοισι φόνοις οὐ δεύετο βωμός,
ἀλλὰ μύσος τοῦτ' ἔσκεν ἐν ἀνθρώποισι μέγιστον,
θυμὸν ἀπορραίσαντας ἐ<ν>έδμεναι ἠέα γυῖα (10)

To them, neither Ares nor Kydoimos [43] [battle tumult] were gods,
neither Zeus the king, nor Kronos, nor Poseidon,
but Kypris [Aphrodite] was their queen.
Her they appeased with properly respectful gifts:
with pictures of animals and with finely crafted perfumes,
with burnt offerings of pure myrrh and sweet-smelling frankincense,
and by pouring yellow honey on the ground.
The altar was not drenched with the pure gore of bulls,
but this was the greatest pollution among humans:
to wash out the soul[44] and eat the noble limbs.

In this blissful time, every living being was tame and peaceful; it was the age of kindliness, *φιλοφροσύνη* (Fr. B 130 DK).[45] At some point, however, humans started killing and sacrificing animals, and so committed the greatest pollution (v. 9: *μύσος μέγιστον*), since, according to Empedocles' theory of transmigration, sacrificial ritual can even represent cannibalism (Fr. B 137 DK):

μορφὴν δ' ἀλλάξαντα πατὴρ φίλον υἱὸν ἀείρας
σφάζει ἐπευχόμενος μέγα νήπιος· οἱ δ' ἀπορεῦνται
λισσόμενον θύοντες· ὁ δ' αὖ νήκουστος ὁμοκλέων
σφάξας ἐν μεγάροισι κακὴν ἀλεγύνατο δαῖτα.
ὡς δ' αὔτως πατέρ' υἱὸς ἑλὼν καὶ μητέρα παῖδες (5)
θυμὸν ἀπορραίσαντε φίλας κατὰ σάρκας ἔδουσιν.

[43] Kydoimos is personified as companion of Enyo and Eris in *Il.* 5.593; 18.535.

[44] *ἀπορραίνω*, 'to sprinkle out', is strongly associated with purification rituals and washing (being a derivative of *ῥαίνω* and a cognate of *περιῤῥαίνω*). *ἀπορραίνω* was habitually used in medical authors for sprinkling 'by way of lustration' (LSJ, s.v.). Here it builds a strong antithesis with the polluting act of killing. Significantly, Empedocles uses the noun *thymos* in this context, perhaps implying the survival of the vital principle of the sacrificial animal.

[45] As much else in Empedocles, it is difficult to understand what the relationship of the 'golden age' of humanity under Aphrodite and the depiction of the *daimonic* fall in Fr. B 115 DK is. Wright 1995: 63–7 interprets Fr. B 115 DK as an allegory for the state of humanity: 'in human terms exile results from shedding blood and swearing falsely, and these are given as the acts committed by the *daimon*, resulting in his present banishment' (p. 69). He also interprets Fr. B 115 DK, ll. 13–14 as Empedocles' flesh-eating (p. 69). Frs. B 128 and B 130 DK are accordingly taken as the early history of man. When humans started eating flesh they were exiled from their blissful existence, and this is why their life is so wretched now. This interpretation is suggestive. The problem with allegory (if we should perceive Fr. B 115 as an allegory) is that there is no certain way of validating the interpretation.

> After a son has changed his form, his father lifts him up
> and slaughters him, all the while praying, in childish naivety. They, without
> means to understand their actions[46]
> sacrifice him who is pleading. The father, deaf to reproaches,
> having slaughtered him prepares in his house a bad feast.
> And in the same way a son snatches his father and children their mother
> they wash out their soul,[47] eating their own flesh and blood.

It is due to their lack of knowledge about the *daimonic* element in living things that humans kill and eat their own family members: this change of form (*μορφὴν δ' ἀλλάξαντα*, v. 1) means that one's own son (*φίλον υἱὸν*, v. 1) could reappear as a sacrificial animal. Furthermore, humans do this in the earnest belief that they are performing religiously correct acts and pleasing the gods. What they really do is murder; worse, they also sin against suppliants,[48] and instead of gaining divine favour, they incur further pollution.[49] This passage implies that the precise nature of the *daimon*'s previous incarnation matters, for Empedocles claims that even when the form changes—from, for instance, a human into an animal—sacrifice of this animal is in some way related to the human form that the *daimon* had in its previous incarnation. In addition, the present form of the *daimon* also matters for its future corporeal incarnation, since Empedocles suggests that our behaviour in this life can improve our lot in the next incarnation. To instruct how to acquire a better lot in the next incarnation, Empedocles set out a number of prohibitions for his fellow men,[50] most importantly, he emphatically urges them to stop eating meat (Fr. B 136 DK):

> *οὐ παύσεσθε φόνοιο δυσηχέος; οὐκ ἐσορᾶτε*
> *ἀλλήλους δάπτοντες ἀκηδείῃσι νόοισι;*

[46] *ἀπορέω* implies lack of means and resources, and the meaning here is that those sacrificing do not know what their action really represents.

[47] On this phrase, see n. 44.

[48] Inwood 2001: 271 translates *λισσόμενον* as 'suppliant', which is correct, since someone who is pleading at an altar is essentially a suppliant. Killing a suppliant was a grave transgression and incurred pollution and divine wrath, see Parker 1983: 181–5 and our discussion of Aeschylus' *Suppliants* in Ch. 8.

[49] Empedocles' doctrine essentially means that, as long as they are living in oblivion of their true daemonic nature, humans tragically misinterpret their own lives and actions. Accordingly, Fr. B 112 DK is a bitter irony: if all living beings are exiles, then the citizens of Acragas, because of the origin of their *daimones*, are both exiles themselves and the recipients of exiles in their religious practices (Fr. B 112, 3 DK: 'welcoming harbours for foreigners'). Also the phrase 'inexperienced in evil' (v. 3) gains new meaning: the citizens of Acragas have been unaware of the crimes their *daimones* have committed. Osborne 1987: 34–5 interprets the whole fragment B 115 DK as ironic, which would also subvert Empedocles' claim to divinity, but we do not think that this is necessarily the case.

[50] Fr. B 141 DK is a command to refrain from eating beans, though this line is disputed, see Wright 1995: 289. Empedocles urged men to stay away from laurel (Fr. B 140 DK), which is probably a genuine prohibition. Sexual restraint was also advised; see on this Inwood 2001: 89–90.

> Will you not stop with ill-reputed murder? Don't you see
> in carelessness of your mind that you are devouring each other?'

A life focused on avoidance of pollution will lead to an ontological promotion. As Empedocles states, at the end of the torturous cycle of earthly reincarnations one can become a figure of authority, and then, a god (Frs. B 146 and B 147 DK):

> εἰς δὲ τέλος μάντεις τε καὶ ὑμνοπόλοι καὶ ἰητροί
> καὶ πρόμοι ἀνθρώποισιν ἐπιχθονίοισι πέλονται,
> ἔνθεν ἀναβλαστοῦσι θεοὶ τιμῇσι φέριστοι.
>
> ἀθανάτοις ἄλλοισιν ὁμέστιοι, αὐτοτράπεζοι
> ἐόντες, ἀνδρείων ἀχέων ἀπόκληροι, ἀτειρεῖς.
>
> At the end, seers, poets, and healers
> and leaders of men, inhabitants of earth, come into existence,
> from there, gods spring up, highest in honours.
>
> With the other immortals sharing the hearth and sharing the table,
> having no share in human suffering, indestructible.

As is evident from Fr. B 112 DK, Empedocles has already reached this stage himself: he is a poet, a prophet, a healer, and a leader. Taken together, Frs. B 112, 115, 126–8, and 136–7 DK produce a coherent picture for the general, exoteric audience: Empedocles' poetry functions as divine commandments, a revelation of a sort, with the aim of informing humans about the sources of the greatest pollutions, and about the pathways to ontological progression.

In sum, the *daimon* who is treated as pollution (λῦμα) by all earthly elements in all his incarnations is the conscious part of the living creature, that which, as we saw earlier, subsequent ancient authors understood as a soul (ψυχή). It is precisely this *daimonic* element that is common to all the past mortal forms of living creatures, and it is this transcendent part which is polluted. For Empedocles, therefore, inner pollution is the natural state of humanity, and this inner pollution can be further aggravated by committing acts of murder. This pollution has a pronounced moral dimension: it is κακότης, bad acts voluntarily committed.[51] Empedocles urges his contemporaries to 'stay away from the badness' (νηστεῦσαι κακότητος)[52] and admonishes them of the consequences for the inner self (Fr. B 145 DK):

> τοιγάρτοι χαλεπῇσιν ἀλύοντες κακότησιν
> οὔποτε δειλαίων ἀχέων λωφήσετε θυμόν.
>
> Therefore distraught by wretched badness
> you will never relieve your soul (*thymos*) from woeful suffering.[53]

[51] On *kakotes* as pollution, see also Ch. 1 on Hesiod. [52] Fr. B 144 DK.

[53] The wording δειλαίων ἀχέων λωφήσετε θυμόν merits closer analysis than we can afford here; literal translation would need to highlight the aspect of healing connoted by the verb

Empedocles offers methods of avoiding this moral badness and provides the hope of a better lot in the next life. This knowledge, once obtained, obliges humans to change their behaviour. If they do not, they will be breaking divine commandments voluntarily, which will result in further pollutions and will arrest their development in the circle of transfiguration.

The centrality of pollution to Empedocles' teachings is evident also in several passages dealing with metaphysical purity. Among these, the ideas of pure speech and pure intentions are particularly remarkable. We will round up our discussion of Empedocles by focusing on these two issues; we start with the notion of pure speech (Fr. B 3. 1–5 DK):

ἀλλὰ θεοὶ τῶν μὲν μανίην ἀποτρέψατε γλώσσης,
ἐκ δ' ὁσίων στομάτων καθαρὴν ὀχετεύσατε πηγήν
καὶ σέ, πολυμνήστη λευκώλενε παρθένε Μοῦσα,
ἄντομαι, ὧν θέμις ἐστὶν ἐφημερίοισιν ἀκούειν,
πέμπε παρ' Εὐσεβίης ἐλάουσ' εὐήνιον ἅρμα. (5)

But gods, turn away their madness from my tongue
and from my religiously correct (*hosion*) mouth pour out a pure spring
and you, much-courted/much-remembering[54] white-armed virgin Muse
I approach you with prayers. Send what is divinely sanctioned (*themis*) for ephemeral creatures to hear,
from Proper Respect for the Gods (*Eusebeia*) driving a well-reined chariot.[55]

This fragment is usually associated with the poem *On Nature*. It was probably placed towards the beginning of the poem, and it may very well represent part of its proem.[56] The invocation of the Muse is a topos of epic poetry; Empedocles embeds this invocation in a prayer, first to all gods and then to one Muse specifically. While the verb ἄντομαι in line 4 makes this prayer context explicit, we can also note that the whole passage is brimming with the language of ritual.

The vocabulary which Empedocles uses to describe his mouth, the stream flowing from it, and the content of the speech is revealing—purity and proper religious conduct are expressed in terms conventionally associated with ritual texts. Before we embark on our analysis of the individual terms,

λωφάω: the suffering of the *thymos* will not abate if one is distraught by χαλεπῇσιν . . . κακότησιν. This picks up on B 112 DK, vv. 11–12, where Empedocles states that people ask him to hear 'an utterance that brings good healing (*euekea baxin*) from all sorts of diseases (*epi nouson pantoion*), since they have long been pierced through by grave ailments (χαλεπῇσι πεπαρμένοι <ἀμφ' ὀδύνῃσιν>).' Fr. B 145 DK implies that Empedocles' revelation is the cure from human suffering.

[54] Both meanings are possible; see Hardie 2013: 232–3 for an overview of the discussion.

[55] The verb ἄντομαι in the meaning 'meet with prayers, entreat' is first attested here, while in Homer it normally designates meetings with hostile intent. It is intransitive, and it is not normally constructed with an infinitive. On the textual issues, and for an overview of proposed solutions, Wright 1995: 157–8.

[56] Wright 1995: 157 and Riedweg 1995: 54.

it is important to note that the purity of words is twofold here. On the one hand, the terms denoting purity are a formal, generic characteristic of a prayer. Since Empedocles is praying to the gods, he stresses the religious correctness and purity necessary for encountering the divine. On the other hand, the object of the request is also qualified as pure: Empedocles uses pure language to pray for a pure gift from the gods—namely, the epic he is about to perform.

Empedocles begins by asking the gods to avert madness, *mania*, from his tongue (v. 1). What sort of *mania* might this be? Alex Hardie argues that the 'madness of those people' concerns previous poets, and that Empedocles followed Xenophanes (Fr. B 11 DK) in rejecting the scandalous and blasphemous myths of Homer and Hesiod.[57] This interpretation seems very convincing. The metre and the topos of invoking the Muse point towards the epic genre, and contemporary audiences would have immediately associated Empedocles' poetry with the epic tradition. Furthermore, Empedocles presents a cosmogony, just as Hesiod did in his *Theogony*. It is clear that Empedocles was influenced by Hesiod's poem and engaged closely with it, and there are further compelling similarities between their works.[58] Hesiod's two central epics, *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, are based on one and the same doctrine:[59] in the first he provides a cosmology and then, in the *Works and Days*, a set of instructions for human life. The second part of *Works and Days* contains numerous purity regulations and instructions for performing rituals,[60] and Hesiod promises a life of blessings and prosperity to those who adhere to his rules. Even if Empedocles' *On Nature* and *Purifications* were two titles of one and the same poem, the transmitted fragments allow us to safely conclude that he too offers a cosmology and a set of instructions for life. Empedocles also pays special attention to religious rituals, focuses on purity, and promises great rewards in this life (and the next) to those who adhere to his doctrines. Despite being inspired and influenced by Hesiod, however, Empedocles' views on the origins of the world and of the gods and his vision of a righteous and pious life are ultimately very different, and they owe more

[57] Hardie 2013 is a thorough discussion of Frs. B 3.1–5 and B 131 DK: he argues that the Muse in Empedocles represents an agent of cosmic *phren*, elemental harmony, and that the hymnic invocation of the Muse is a request for an auditory epiphany. He concludes (p. 226) that the 'Muse is allegorized both as Empedocles' logos and as something like the musical aspect of divine *phren*'.

[58] Most 2007: 284–92 is an illuminating analysis of Empedocles' borrowing from Hesiod, focusing on Frs. B 128 DK ≈ *Op.* 109–26; B 61 DK ≈ *Th.* 304–25; B 115 DK ≈ *Th.* 783–804. Most concludes (p. 289): 'Empedocles found in Hesiod a vision of the world which in certain key respects (though of course not in all) was closely similar to his own, so that in some features Empedocles' philosophy can be understood as a profoundly original interpretation and further elaboration of Hesiod's cosmology.' He argues (p. 292) that 'Empedocles' philosophy can be understood as a rationalizing interpretation of Hesiod's mythic poetry'.

[59] Clay 2003. [60] See Ch. 1 on Hesiod.

to Pythagorean and 'Orphic' doctrines.[61] By stressing that he wants the gods to turn his speech away from the *mania* of others, then, Empedocles is separating his own work from, and asserting its moral superiority to, the previous epic tradition. In the second verse he stresses religious correctness (*hosiotes*) and his wish to channel a stream that is *καθαρή*—not simply pure, but ritually pure, 'fit to encounter the gods'. One is tempted to read this request as a critique of the 'madness of those people'—Empedocles' poetry, unlike previous epic, will be religiously correct.

Empedocles, as has been recognized, uses well-attested poetological metaphors—such as the chariot, the path of song, and metaphors associating speech with water—in this passage.[62] He modifies these familiar metaphors to emphasize their ritual, often cathartic, connotations: rather than focusing on the flow of poetry resembling the flow of water, he stresses that the spring is pure; rather than simply mentioning a chariot of song, his chariot comes from a place of *Eusebeia*. The water implied here—his poetic utterance—is ritual water,[63] and its source is a mouth capable of saying religiously correct things. By threading ritual language through these lines, Empedocles brings to mind the process of ritual purification. Taken together with the rejection of *mania*, the language of purity implies that Empedocles is invoking the gods to request that they should cleanse him. He may even be alluding specifically to rituals for healing madness: purification is widely attested as a treatment for this condition, with rituals designed to wash away the divine anger commonly seen as its cause.[64] We can thus read Empedocles' invocation as a request for purification from *mania*, and for the purification of the mouth and words which will serve as a medium for transmitting what is divinely sanctioned (v. 4, *θέμις ἐστὶν*) for mortals to hear. He separates himself from previous poets, and prepares his body and mind to communicate this divine message. This implies purity of the mind, and so Empedocles goes beyond a request for *euphemia* ('good speech'[65]) here. By asking the gods

[61] The existence of some sort of implicit or explicit—explicit, if Fr. B 129 DK is about Pythagoras—connection between Pythagoras and Empedocles can scarcely be doubted, and the possible links have often been studied, though the details, and the exact meaning, of such a relationship, are controversial. For an overview, Zhmud 2012: 39–41. On the 'Orphic' influences on Empedocles, see this chapter, p. 83.

[62] On Empedocles' poetological metaphors, Nünlist 2005. Nünlist also discusses Fr. B 3 DK (pp. 79–80), and concludes that the chariot metaphor recalls Parmenides' proem and other passages, and that the purity of the spring is indicative of the purity of Empedocles' message. He concludes, however, that in this specific context *καθαρός* has the connotations (p. 88 n. 22) 'unmixed, clean, genuine, truthful'.

[63] Spring water was commonly used in cathartic rituals; for references, see 'What Is Ritual Purity? A Concise Typology of Ritual Purity in Greek Religion' in the Introduction chapter (pp. 25–32).

[64] On madness as an object of purification, Parker 1983: 208; Burkert 1985: 80; Hoessly 2001: 99–148, 173–80, 224–8.

[65] We use the term *euphemia* to denote 'good speech' rather than 'observance of sacred silence', except for those passages where we explicitly state so. For an overview of the history of

to help him reject *mania*—the blasphemous speech of his epic colleagues—by purifying his mouth and speech, Empedocles qualifies *mania* as pollution. To put it bluntly, for Empedocles, *mania* is impurity of mind.

Empedocles' invocation is a two-step process. To begin with, he invokes the gods and requests a state of mental purity (vv. 1–2). The pure stream becomes a cleansing agent in verse 2, and Empedocles' contemporaries would be able to associate this stream with the flowing water they themselves used in cathartic rituals.[66] Thus prepared, Empedocles is ready to approach the Muse with prayers (*ἄντομαι*) and to become her channel.

The second step is the request Empedocles makes of the Muse. He asks for 'a divinely sanctioned utterance fit for humans to hear, coming from a place of *Eusebeia*' (vv. 4–5). Scholars have long noted that this formulation, *ὧν θέμις ἐστὶν ἐφημερίοισιν ἀκούειν*, has revelatory overtones: Kahn comments that the passage has 'the spirit of mysterious, half-suppressed revelation'.[67] The importance of knowledge and of the access to knowledge, as well as a division between those who may and may not be allowed to know, is an issue stressed also by Riedweg,[68] who points out that 'Orphic' material includes similar formulas: in his view, OF 1b (Bernabé), with the formulation *φθέγξομαι οἷς θέμις ἐστί· θύρας δ' ἐπίθεσθε, βέβηλοι* ('I will announce to those for whom it is divinely sanctioned; shut the doors, you uninitiated'), represents a parallel to Empedocles' words, and he argues that the formal characteristics of *On Nature* resemble 'Orphic' *hieroi logoi*.[69] Despite these similarities, the differences between the two passages are evident: while OF 1b relates to the initiates exclusively, promising them access to privileged knowledge which will remain inaccessible for the uninitiated, Empedocles asks for knowledge appropriate for all mortals. The language Empedocles employs is indeed that associated with mystic initiation, but the difference in access to knowledge is not between the initiates and non-initiates; rather, and in line with his doctrines, it is between what is appropriate for mortals to know and what is appropriate for the gods to know.

The expression *θέμις ἐστίν* could also mean something to Greeks who were not familiar with the 'Orphic' texts. It is frequently attested in inscriptions set up at the entrance of sanctuaries, where it acts as a prohibition of entry to certain groups of people. Many Greek sanctuaries restricted access, and it was important for the worshippers to know the regulations, since

the term and its uses, as well as of the history of scholarship on this point, Gödde 2011: 4–27, who focuses exclusively on explicit attestations of *euphemia*.

[66] On flowing water used for preliminary purifications, see 'What Is Ritual Purity? A Concise Typology of Ritual Purity in Greek Religion' in the Introduction chapter (p. 27).

[67] Kahn 1960: 6.

[68] For a discussion of 'Orphic' influences on Empedocles, with bibliography, see Riedweg 1995.

[69] Riedweg 1995: 57. See also our discussion, this chapter, p. 83.

violating the rules of access was considered sacrilege.[70] For example, a fifth-century BC entry regulation from the sanctuary of Zeus of Paros states the following (*LSCG* 109): [ὅ]ρος Ὑπάτο· ἀ̣τ̣[ελ]έστοι οὐ θέμ[ι]ς, οὐδὲ γυναι[κ]ί, 'Hypatos' precinct. No uninitiated or woman allowed (= "divinely sanctioned")'.[71] The same expression was used to denote a prohibition of certain types of sacrifice.[72] The term Empedocles employs thus evokes common ritual prohibitions and has strong religious connotations, not necessarily restricted to 'Orphism'.

In the final line of our passage we again encounter a poetological metaphor with a strong religious overtone. The chariot of the Muse should come 'from the place of *Eusebeia*'. Empedocles mentions *eusebeia* in Fr. B 128 DK, where he describes the reign of Aphrodite; as we discussed above, this passage is similarly brimming with ritual expressions, and it is also significant that Empedocles is describing sacrificial rituals here. He stresses that only bloodless offerings were given to Aphrodite and describes the gifts to the goddess as εὐσεβὴ ἀγάλματα (B 128 DK, v. 4). If we read all the transmitted fragments of Empedocles as a coherent doctrine, then there is no 'place of piety' in Empedocles' current world, and this is perhaps why he implies that this place is in the heavenly realm. His message will help to create a place of piety on earth, and the road towards this is a complete knowledge of cosmology, and of the way in which the world works. Whereas in the passage depicting the age of Aphrodite Empedocles focuses on religiously correct rituals (*dromena*) and outlines the type of offerings which are respectful to the gods (εὐσεβὴ ἀγάλματα, B 128 DK l. 4–7), in Fr. B 3 he invokes the Muse, asking for the kind of speech that is ὅσιος and εὐσεβής. In doing this, he introduces a new topic: εὐσεβὴ λεγόμενα, religiously correct speech about the gods.

In conclusion, Empedocles' prayer is more than *euphemia*: it is a request for the purification of epic poetry in which Empedocles is ritually purified by the gods in order to serve as a medium for the Muse who will transmit a religiously respectful message. This message will not overstep the bounds of what the gods allow humans to know. This is clearly demonstrated by the second invocation of the Muse, where Empedocles focuses on *euphemia* and further qualifies the utterance which is passed on to him as 'good speech regarding the blessed gods'.[73] This type of pure, divine, and religiously correct speech is constructed in opposition to *mania*, the mental impurity of Empedocles' rivals.

[70] On the entry regulations, see Petrovic and Petrovic 2014 and, for the full dossier of these texts, Petrovic and Petrovic 2016.

[71] Other early examples are *LSCG* 110 (5th cent. BC, Paros) and Hdt. 5.72.3.

[72] *LSCG* 114, Thasos, 5th cent. BC, Sanctuary of Apollo, Nymphs, and Charites: prohibition against sacrificing piglets, goats, and sheep.

[73] Fr. B 131.4 DK: ἀμφὶ θεῶν μακάρων ἀγαθὸν λόγον. On this passage, Hardie 2013.

From the pure speaker we now turn to the issue of the pure listener. The following passage belongs to the group of fragments which address the individual 'you' and offer an esoteric doctrine of natural cosmology. Empedocles addresses someone who wishes to know about the working of the *kosmos*, and lays out his doctrine about the first elements, the two forces, the cycles of the *kosmos*, and the accounts of all living things.[74] In this fragment too, Empedocles uses terminology associated with Greek rituals in order to instruct his pupil—in Fr. B 1 DK identified as Pausanias—as to how he should receive his teacher's knowledge, and strikingly, he emphasizes the importance of the listener's pure inner disposition (Fr. B 110 DK):

εἰ γάρ κέν σφ' ἀδινῇσιν ὑπὸ πραπίδεσσιν ἐρείσας
εὐμενέως καθαρῇσιν ἐποπτεύσῃς μελέτῃσιν,
ταῦτά τέ σοι μάλα πάντα δι' αἰῶνος παρέσονται,
ἄλλα τε πόλλ' ἀπὸ τῶνδε κτ<ήσε>αι[75]· αὐτὰ γὰρ αὔξει
ταῦτ' εἰς ἦθος ἕκαστον, ὅπη φύσις ἐστὶν ἑκάστῳ. (5)
εἰ δὲ σύ γ' ἀλλοίων ἐπορέξεαι, οἷα κατ' ἄνδρας
μυρία δειλὰ πέλονται ἃ τ' ἀμβλύνουσι μερίμνας,
ἤ σ' ἄφαρ ἐκλείψουσι περιπλομένοιο χρόνοιο
σφῶν αὐτῶν ποθέοντα φίλην ἐπὶ γένναν ἱκέσθαι·
πάντα γὰρ ἴσθι φρόνησιν ἔχειν καὶ νώματος αἶσαν.

After you have planted them in your hard-packed mind
if you observe them with pure heed and well disposed,
these things will indeed assist you in eternity,
and from these you will obtain many other things: for they grow,
of themselves, every one of them towards their distinctive character, as is the nature of each.
And if you should stretch yourself towards things of different nature,
of the kind that are terrible and exist in tens of thousands among men, and that blunt thoughts,
indeed they will leave you in the course of time,
yearning after their own, they will go to their own kind.
You should know that everything possesses intelligence and has a share of thought.

There are two closely related points which stand out in this passage. Firstly, Empedocles uses the term *ἐποπτεύω* (v. 2), which is associated with initiation rituals; secondly, he again stresses the notion of ritual purity. The verb *ἐποπτεύω*, as scholars have long noted, has an unmistakably mystic character and belongs to the technical vocabulary of initiation: *ἐποπτεύω*, 'to oversee, watch', denotes an *ἐπόπτης*, a person 'admitted to the highest grade of the

[74] On Empedocles' esoteric audience, Curd 2005.

[75] We read *τῶνδε κτ<ήσε>αι*, with Marcovich, Wright, and Inwood. *τωνδεκτ(ή· η)ται* MSS; *τῶνδ' ἐκτήσεαι* DK; *τῶνδε κτήσεται* Bollack.

mysteries'.[76] With the phrase *καθαρῇσιν ἐποπτεύσῃς μελέτῃσιν* (v. 2, 'observe them with pure heed'), Empedocles not only alludes to the mystery initiation, but also to the process of purification, which was a necessary prerequisite for initiation. Since mysteries belonged to the most solemn of Greek rituals, a special emphasis was laid on obtaining ritual purity.[77] While our sources for mystery initiations provide information about achieving physical purity, Empedocles emphasizes the purity of *meletai*. The use of *μελέτη* is noteworthy in this context. Normally, it denotes '(object of) care', or '(object of) attention'. Remarkably often it relates to intellectual exercises, such as poetic practices and the rehearsals of the orators, and Empedocles uses it in another fragment (B 131 DK) to denote 'earlier engagement by the Muse' during formulation of the thought ('logos-gestation', in Alex Hardie's words).[78] In the context of our present passage the word carries a twofold meaning. On the one hand, it evokes language associated with farming and is used in the sense of 'tending to', in keeping with other such references in the fragment: 'planting' (*ἐρείσας*, v. 1), 'growing' (*αὔξει*, v. 4), and 'producing for oneself' (*κτ<ήσε>αι*, v. 4). On the other hand, it denotes intellectual care, the repeated mental exertions which should prepare Pausanias to successfully receive Empedocles' teaching, and which should thus effectively help Pausanias to prevent his *μέριμναι* ('thoughts,' v. 7) from becoming blunted. 'Pure heed' is therefore conceptualized as a repeated spiritual tilling of Pausanias' *πραπίδες*—a prerequisite for the pupil's reception of Empedocles' words, and an exercise in mental purity which will prepare Pausanias for his encounter with Empedocles' thought.

Some commentators on this fragment who recognize Empedocles' use of language related to the mysteries see this merely as a figure of speech which adds solemnity to the poem.[79] Riedweg, on the other hand, argues that Empedocles was influenced by 'Orphic' *hieroi logoi* and 'Orphism' in general.[80] He suggests that in this passage, and throughout his poem *On Nature*,[81] Empedocles appropriates not just the language of 'Orphic' mysteries but also the form and setting of the 'Orphic' *Hieros logos*. The 'Orphic' poem featured Orpheus as mystery priest initiating Musaeus in the true nature of the divine. Riedweg posits that this is mirrored in the poem *On Nature*, which features Empedocles initiating Pausanias into the secrets of the true functioning of the universe, and the true essence of the divine.[82]

Although it is difficult to know to what extent Empedocles drew on 'Orphic' theogonies, his allusion to the mystery initiations in Fr. B 110 DK seems certain, particularly through his use of *ἐποπτεύω*. This is a word which, strictly speaking, does not even fit well into Empedocles' doctrine on the essential nature of the divine: even though he asserts that the god cannot

[76] LSJ, s.v. [77] Parker 1983: 283–6. [78] Hardie 2013: 223 and LSJ, s.v.
[79] Wright 1995: 259 and similarly Bollack 1965–9: 3. 578–9.
[80] Riedweg 1995: 53–9. [81] Riedweg 1995 argues for two different poems.
[82] Riedweg 1995: 53–9.

be approached by eyes or grasped by hands (Fr. B 133 DK), and that the god is mind, holy and ineffable, alone (Fr. B 134 DK), he nevertheless uses the verb ἐποπτεύω, which has clear connotations with *watching*.[83] This allusion to the mysteries indeed adds solemnity to his address of the listener; more than this, it also stresses the special, privileged status of the doctrine Empedocles is about to divulge. The listener must be in a specific mental state in order to receive Empedocles' teaching, one which is characterized in terms of ritual purity—his mind must be fit to encounter the gods. This is in keeping with Empedocles' presentation of his doctrine as divine knowledge: in Fr. 3 DK he himself is being purified in order to invoke the Muse, who sends him a divine message: the madness of others (which we interpret as mental impurity) must be purged, and Empedocles' mouth must be religiously correct in order to receive the gods' pure spring and transmit the message sent from the place of proper respect for the gods. In Fr. B 131 DK Empedocles further specifies this knowledge as ἀγαθὸς λόγος ἀμφὶ θεῶν, 'good speech about the gods'. Since the knowledge comes from the god[84] and is about the gods, both the narrator and the addressee must obtain purity in order to receive and understand it. This is the reason why Empedocles' mouth (*stoma*) and his whole speech are being purified in Fr. B 3 DK, and why he requests pure heed (*meletai*) from the addressee in Fr. B 110 DK. In our opinion, 'pure heed' is not a metaphor, but a request for the purity of mind as a prerequisite for encountering divinities. In Empedocles' case, the divine message is a manifestation of the divine, and both the narrator and the listener must obtain the inner purity in order to confront it. Empedocles goes even further, because Fr. B 110 DK implies that the message stays with the recipient, 'planted' in the mind (v. 1). Hence, every time one thinks about imparted knowledge, one must have 'pure heed': purity of mind is here a repetitive mental exercise.

[83] In Fr. B 3. 9–13 he even admonishes his listener not to rely on the eyes.

[84] Cf. Fr. B 23. The commentators point out that the *theos* in this passage is the Muse, see Wright 1995: 181.

Part III

Inner Purity and Pollution in Sympotic Settings

5

Xenophanes on Good Thinking while Drinking

Summary: Xenophanes of Colophon, *c*.570–467 BC. We discuss Fr. B 1 DK, a sympotic elegy which forges a link between ritual purity, *euphemia*, and correct thinking about the gods (v. 24, *θεῶν προμηθείη ἀγαθή*). In his description of an ideal symposium, Xenophanes outlines a process of intensification of purity from outward to metaphysical purity (ritual words), and locates its source in the correct mental attitude: moving on from the depiction of the preliminary purifications (vv. 1–2), Xenophanes intensifies the purity motif by focusing on the gifts for the gods (wine and frankincense, vv. 5–7), and then he specifies the mental state of symposiasts and the wording and topics of their hymns and prayers (vv. 13–16). By providing precise instructions for the hymns (vv. 13–14, *χρὴ . . . θεὸν ὑμνεῖν εὔφρονας ἄνδρας εὐφήμοις μύθοις καὶ καθαροῖσι λόγοις*) and the prayers to be able to do what is just (vv. 15–17, *εὐξαμένους τὰ δίκαια δύνασθαι πρήσσειν . . . οὐχ ὕβρεις*), Xenophanes implies that the correct thinking about the gods is a prerequisite for the ritually pure words.

Even though Xenophanes does not expressly qualify the mind or the soul of the worshippers as pure, he stresses the importance of the correct, pious mental attitude as the basis for correct ritual actions. In Xenophanes, we find a convergence of appropriate and pure ritual action, *euphemia*, justice as object of prayer, and a well-disposed mind of the worshipper which are all based in the correct thinking about the gods (*θεῶν προμηθείη ἀγαθή*).

Xenophanes was born in Colophon; he went westwards as a young man and spent his long life as a wandering sage, presenting his poetry throughout the Greek world, mainly in Sicily and southern Italy.[1] He is best known for offering the most comprehensive criticism of representations of the gods in Greek art and myth, in particular those related in Homer and Hesiod.[2] To

[1] On Xenophanes' profession, Ford 2002: 49–52. Xenophanes' passages are cited by the Diels–Kranz numbering.

[2] Intellectual criticism: Fr. 21 B 14 DK (mortals suppose that the gods are born, that they have a voice and a body, and that they wear clothes); Fr. B 15 DK (each living being would think that gods resemble its species); Fr. B 16 DK (each race represents the gods as being similar to it).

representations which stress the anthropomorphic features of divine beings, Xenophanes juxtaposes a god who is a non-anthropomorphic entity,[3] characterized by his noetic function: Xenophanes' god 'sees all, thinks all, hears all'.[4]

Only fragments survive of Xenophanes' varied and rich oeuvre. The longest of these, Fr. 1 DK, is a sympotic elegy in which the poet offers important remarks on the purity of speech and the suitable mindset for religiously correct worship. We provide the full text[5] and translation:

νῦν γὰρ δὴ ζάπεδον καθαρὸν καὶ χεῖρες ἁπάντων
καὶ κύλικες· πλεκτοὺς δ' ἀμφιτιθεῖ στεφάνους,
ἄλλος δ' εὐώδες μύρον ἐν φιάλῃ παρατείνει·
κρατὴρ δ' ἕστηκεν μεστὸς εὐφροσύνης,
ἄλλος δ' οἶνος ἕτοιμος, ὃς οὔποτέ φησι προδώσειν, (5)
μείλιχος ἐν κεράμοισ' ἄνθεος ὀζόμενος·
ἐν δὲ μέσοισ' ἁγνὴν ὀδμὴν λιβανωτὸς ἵησι·
ψυχρὸν δ' ἔστιν ὕδωρ καὶ γλυκὺ καὶ καθαρόν·
πάρκεινται δ' ἄρτοι ξανθοὶ γεραρή τε τράπεζα
τυροῦ καὶ μέλιτος πίονος ἀχθομένη· (10)
βωμὸς δ' ἄνθεσιν ἀν τὸ μέσον πάντῃ πεπύκασται,
μολπὴ δ' ἀμφὶς ἔχει δώματα καὶ θαλίη.
χρὴ δὲ πρῶτον μὲν θεὸν ὑμνεῖν εὔφρονας ἄνδρας
εὐφήμοις μύθοις καὶ καθαροῖσι λόγοις·
σπείσαντας δὲ καὶ εὐξαμένους τὰ δίκαια δύνασθαι (15)
πρήσσειν (ταῦτα γὰρ ὧν ἐστι προχειρότερον,
οὐχ ὕβρεις)·[6] πίνειν ὁπόσον κεν ἔχων ἀφίκοιο
οἶκαδ' ἄνευ προπόλου μὴ πάνυ γηραλέος.
ἀνδρῶν δ' αἰνεῖν τοῦτον ὃς ἐσθλὰ πιὼν ἀναφαίνει,
ὡς ᾗ[7] μνημοσύνη καὶ τόνος ἀμφ' ἀρετῆς, (20)
οὔτι μάχας διέπων Τιτήνων οὐδὲ Γιγάντων

Moral criticism, focusing on Homer and Hesiod: Frs. B 11 and 12 DK. Literature on this subject is vast; for an overview, Meijer 1981; Emlyn-Jones 1992; for a critique of common perceptions of Xenophanes' criticism, Ford 2002: 46–66; Most 2007: 274–6.

[3] Fr. B 23 DK.

[4] Fr. B 24 DK. On Xenophanes' theology, see now Granger 2013, with bibliography.

[5] Some scholars posit that a poem is unlikely to begin with *γάρ*; Bowra 1938: 121 and Marcovich 1978 assume that a couplet may be missing at the beginning. Faraone 2008: 116–27 argues persuasively in favour of a complete poem, which consists out of two six-couplet stanzas.

[6] The poem was quoted by Athenaeus (462c=11.7); the original reading of the manuscript was *ὕβρεις*. In 1514 Musurus, the early editor of Athenaeus, introduced the reading *ὕβρις*, which was then adopted by most scholars and editors of Xenophanes. West 1974 reverted to *ὕβρεις*, and this constructs an antithesis to *ταῦτα γὰρ ὧν ἐστι προχειρότερον* which we follow. Marcovich 1978: 3–4 and 7–8 sides with West and translates the prayer as: 'praying for strength [*or*, for faculty] to do the right (for this is the more obvious thing to pray for, not for acts of violence).' For controversies surrounding textual constitution, see Adkins 1985: 180–2.

[7] DK print *ὥς οἱ*; we read *ὡς ᾗ* with West 1972.

οὐδέ <τε> Κενταύρων, πλάσματα τῶν προτέρων,
ἢ στάσιας σφεδανάς, τοῖσ᾽ οὐδὲν χρηστὸν ἔνεστι·
θεῶν <δὲ> προμηθείην αἰὲν ἔχειν ἀγαθήν.[8] (24)

For now the floor is clean, and the hands of all,
and the cups; one places wreathed garlands on us,
the other passes along the fragrant myrrh-unguent in a bowl:
the mixing-bowl is set, brimming with good cheer,
there is also other wine ready at hand that promises not to betray us, (5)
soothing in its jars, smelling of flowers.
And frankincense in the middle, sending forth its ritually pure smell.
And there is water, cold, sweet, and pure,
and the golden loaves of bread are laid down, and the majestic table
is loaded with cheese and thick honey. (10)
In the middle is an altar, thickly covered with flowers on all sides,
song and good cheer pervade the entire house.
And the men who are of well-disposed mind should first hymn the god,
with religiously correct tales and purified words,
having poured libations and having prayed for the ability to do (15)
just deeds (for these things are certainly more within reach,
not hubris). One should drink as much as a person could take
and still be able to reach his home without a servant, unless he is very old.
One should praise that one among men who displays nobility after drinking
so that there might be remembering of and effort for excellence, (20)
he does not pursue the battles of Titans or Giants,
nor of Centaurs, figments of men of old,
nor does he pursue violent civil strife: there is nothing useful in these.
One should always hold the gods in good consideration.

The setting of the poem is a symposium. In the Archaic period a symposium was an evening gathering of male members of the Greek elite: the term itself denotes 'a drinking party', which followed a meal. The occasion entailed both a religious and a social ritual. After the guests had eaten, the *andron* ('male room', a space designated for symposia in a private house) would be thoroughly cleaned, and the guests would wash their hands, anoint themselves, and put on garlands. The acts of washing and putting on wreaths represent a transition from the profane to the sacred, from meals to libations, prayers, singing of hymns, and finally, to drinking:[9] similar preparatory rituals of cleansing and adorning (with wreaths) are well attested as prerequisites for entering public sacred spaces and for participation in religious

[8] Instead of *ἀγαθόν*, we follow West's 1972 reading *ἀγαθήν*.

[9] On the symposium in general, Murray 1990, Slater 1991, Schmitt-Pantel 1992, Stehle 1997: 213–61, and Hobden 2013, and for the Archaic period in particular, Wecowski 2014, who, however, takes a somewhat idiosyncratic view of Xenophanes' Fr. 1 DK as 'no symposion at all…it is an anti-symposion conceived by a radically moralizing thinker' (pp. 112–13). On symposia as places where literature was presented, formulated, and debated, Ford 2002: 25–89.

celebrations. Having performed these preparatory cathartic rites, the symposiasts would pour a triple libation of wine to Zeus Olympios and to the Olympians, to the heroes, and to Zeus Soter. During these initial stages of the symposium every effort was made to regulate the behaviour of the participants. At the beginning the members would elect a *symposiarchos* ('master of the drinking party'), whose role would be to take care that the religious and social rules were adhered to. In Xenophanes' poem it is the narrator who assumes this role, laying down the guidelines for proper sympotic conduct, and describing an idealized sympotic space and the ideal participants. The starting point of his narrative is the moment when the meal has been completed and the preparations for the symposium are being brought to an end.

The poem falls into two parts: verses 1–12, which describe the atmosphere of the drinking party and the initial ritual actions, are marked by a deictic reference to a particular moment—'now' (*νῦν*, v. 1), when the religious part of the sympotic ritual commences. Verses 13–24 are a set of generalized instructions, moving past the momentary setting of the first part of the poem, which are applicable to any aristocratic symposium at any point, anywhere. This segment is introduced with the transitional and impersonal *χρή* ('one should') at the beginning of verse 13, which governs a series of infinitives prescribing the stages of ordered and civilized drinking; in the final verse (24) we find a reference to 'always' (*ἀιέν*), which relates immediately to this symposium, but which can also be taken as a general instruction for life.[10] The two parts are linked by the particles *δέ* and *μέν*. *δέ* occurs in almost every line up to verse 12;[11] *μέν*, which makes its first appearance in verse 13, marks the transition to the second section. In a way, the proper performance of the preliminary religious rituals in a religiously correct space in verses 1–12 precedes, and represents a prerequisite for, the direct interactions with the divine in the following verses: the performance of a hymn (vv. 13–14), the libations (v. 15), and the prayers (vv. 15–17). Verse 17, with its infinitive *πίνειν* ('to drink') governed by the *χρή* ('one should') of verse 13, represents the transition from the strictly sacred (libation, prayer, hymn) to the social ritual (vv. 17–20): moderate drinking, and social interaction

[10] The idea that the poem falls into two parts is also advanced by Ziegler 1965 and Marcovich 1978: 4–5: they note that references to *θεὸν* and *θεῶν*, in vv. 13 and 24 respectively, frame the second part of the poem (Lesher 1992: 51). Marcovich 1978: 4–5 observes that the first part of the poem describes the external, preliminary condition of an ideal symposium, and that the second part sets forth ethical and religious precepts for the participants. He also remarks (pp. 9–10) that in part 1 all the verbs are in the present (or perfect-present) tense and that, starting with verse 13, Xenophanes as *symposiarchos* gives instructions for the ensuing ritual.

[11] Verses 1, 6, and 10 are the exceptions; verses 6 and 10, because of their syntactical structure, clearly depend on verses 5 and 9 respectively. The repetition of *δέ* in the first part, together with the consistent use of present tense (see n. 10), vividly depicts the construction of the sympotic atmosphere, and the moments when the constitutive parts of the symposium are brought together in quick succession.

focusing on noble themes.[12] This transition can be successfully negotiated once the religious rituals have been correctly performed.

Scholars have long noted that purity is of paramount importance in all parts of the poem.[13] The first part opens with an emphasis on physical purity (vv. 1–12); the second addresses correct mental disposition and metaphysical purity (vv. 13–24, esp. 13–17 and 24). For the purposes of our discussion, it is the complex gradation of the purity motif in this poem that is most relevant. One can identify four steps in Xenophanes' depiction of this gradation. In the first (vv. 1–4), the purity of the space, participants, and implements come to the fore; in the second (vv. 5–11), the purity and the beauty of material gifts for the gods are emphasized. In step three (vv. 13–17), the purity of ritual words forms the focal point; finally, in step four (vv. 19–24), blasphemy is juxtaposed to the correct mental attitude which one ought to have towards the gods, both in the sympotic space and beyond. The first three steps represent a metamorphosis of purity from the physical to the metaphysical, while in the fourth step Xenophanes indicates that ritual purity ultimately stems from correct thinking about the gods. To reconstruct the gradation of purity we posited, we will move stepwise and will conclude with observations on the nexus between good thinking and all-pervasive ritual purity.

Let us begin with step one. The first two lines of the poem relate to the purity of the floor, the hands, and the cups: the adjective *καθαρόν* unites all three. The cleansing of these items represents a preliminary stage which mirrors the cathartic rituals performed before entering sacred spaces such as divine precincts, or sanctuaries in general. In the symposium, the sacred space first has to be created out of the profane, as the *andron* is transformed into a place of veneration. *χεῖρες* ('hands', v. 1) stands for the participants, and any recipient of Xenophanes' verses would immediately think of the preliminary cathartic rituals which he would perform in his everyday contact with the divine.[14] Even the cups are consecrated by purification, and thus enabled for ritual use.

The next phase of the ritual preparation is beautification. Aesthetic concerns were of paramount importance for the preparation and performance of religious rites, and numerous sacred regulations bear witness to the efforts to organize rituals and festivals to be 'as beautiful as possible' (*ὡς κάλλιστα*).[15] This concern is also noted in many Greek literary texts.[16] Xenophanes' symposiasts

[12] Verses 19–20; also introduced by an infinitive governed by *χρή* of verse 13.

[13] Marcovich 1978: 2 and 5–6; Ford 2002: 55–66, with bibliography.

[14] The washing of hands before libation and sacrifice is attested already in Homer. A classic scene is *Il.* 6.266–8, where preliminary washing before religious rituals is formulated as an obligation. On ritual washing in Homer, Hoessly 2001: 37–43. Hesiod formulates it as a vital rule in *Op.* 724–6. See on Hesiod Ch. 1.

[15] On inscriptional evidence, see Chaniotis 1997*a* and 2006.

[16] I. Petrovic 2012.

put on wreaths, and thus signal the festivity of the occasion.[17] They also anoint themselves with the expensive myrrh-scented unguent, and the sweet smell (εὐώδες μύρον, v. 3), too, belongs to the aesthetic component of the rite. Verse 4 encapsulates and symbolizes the entire sympotic ritual: the *krater* ('mixing bowl') is ready for blending wine with water, and its central role in the symposium is evident. The metaphor—'the mixing-bowl is set, brimming with good cheer' (v. 4)—refers both to the central activity, drinking, and to the basic purpose of a successful symposium, merry socializing: the wine and the people *mix* harmoniously. These efforts reflect the traditional ideas about the gods, who were thought to rejoice in and to be attracted by beauty, cleanliness, sweet smells, and harmony.

The gods also rejoice in gifts, as the very word *agalma* ('delight', 'pleasing gift') testifies,[18] and in step two Xenophanes turns to the offerings of unmixed wine and frankincense which have been prepared for the divinities (vv. 5–7). As in verse 3, he focuses on the pleasing scents: he emphasizes the flowery bouquet of the mild wine, and describes the smell of the frankincense as *hagne* (v. 7, 'ritually pure'). The unmixed wine will be used for libations (v. 15); the fumigation of expensive and exotic frankincense has a dual purpose: it is a gift for the gods and also a means of heightening the purity of space. The central position of frankincense (v. 7) indicates its proximity to the altar, which is also placed in the middle of the sympotic space (v. 11). Frankincense fumigation belongs to the central stages of Greek religious rites: its purpose was to intensify ritual purity—it was not used for the initial cathartic purposes, but only after the purity necessary for a ritual had been obtained.[19] Hence, step two stresses the heightened state of purity at this stage of the symposium by focusing on the pleasant smells of the pure *agalmata*. Wine and frankincense are gifts for the gods, but humans will also enjoy both, and this communal enjoyment unites the gods with the men.

From the gifts for the gods, Xenophanes transitions to a description of the bountiful array of after-dinner snacks for the humans (vv. 9–10), taking care, first, to highlight that the water is *katharon* (v. 8). The scene has been set, and verses 11–12 reinforce the opulence of the symposium as a religious and a social ritual: both the altar and the house are overflowing—the altar with thickly packed flowers, the house with song and celebrations. This depiction evokes the festive processions which moved in harmony, singing, towards the sacrificial altar at great public festivals, filling the whole city with good cheer.

In step three Xenophanes turns to the correct mental disposition and purity of words, which he expresses through a series of impersonal commands as to how the participants in the symposium should act. These participants

[17] On the role of wreaths in religious festivals, Blech 1982.

[18] A derivative from ἀγάλλομαι, ἄγαλμα denotes a gift to gods that makes the gods 'rejoice'; see LSJ, s.v. ἀγάλλω.

[19] Simon 2004: 257–8.

are immediately described as *euphrones* (εὔφρονας ἄνδρας, v. 13). By employing the adjective εὔφρων, Xenophanes alludes both to the atmosphere during the symposium and to the state of mind of the symposiasts: the adjective can denote a cheerful spirit, and in this sense it picks up on the related noun εὐφροσύνη in line 4. Essentially, *euphron* means 'the one in possession of good *phrenes*', which in our poem denotes an individual in possession of a religiously correct mindset well suited to the sympotic occasion. The whole point of using this particular adjective is that it encapsulates both merriment *and* religiously and socially appropriate behaviour at the banquet—the two central themes of Xenophanes' poem. Xenophanes' εὔφρων rejoices in εὐφροσύνη while fulfilling the expectations of a man who is εὐσεβής.[20] In verse 13 Xenophanes begins to describe what people of such a mind should do at the symposium, and the precise means by which they should communicate with the gods. The emphasis is placed on traditional rituals: the performance of a hymn, libation, and prayer.

Men who are of a fitting, well-disposed mind should first pour a libation, perform a prayer, and then hymn the god (vv. 13–17). The way in which the god should be hymned is qualified as εὔφημοι μῦθοι and καθαροὶ λόγοι (v. 14). Throughout the Archaic period we find evidence of close entanglement between concepts of *euphemia*, 'good speech', and purity.[21] The exact meaning of Xenophanes' verse 14 has long been debated: what does Xenophanes mean by εὔφημος μῦθος and καθαρὸς λόγος? How are the two distinct? Xenophanes' characterization of the nouns provides some guidance as to how we should interpret them. We take Xenophanes' μῦθος to refer to the subject-matter of a speech, and his λόγος as referring to narration in terms of the specific details of the content, and the language in which this is expressed.[22]

We start with the εὔφημος μῦθος. The opposite of a *euphemos mythos* is a *blasphemos mythos* (or rather, in Archaic and Classical terminology, a

[20] *Pace* Lesher 1992: 48, who constructs a false dilemma, discards 'soundness or reasonableness of mind' as a 'platitude', and opts for a meaning that is associated with 'the conviviality of the occasion'.

[21] Purity and *euphemia*: Gödde 2011: 82 with n. 32, and 358–9.

[22] Bowra 1953: 4–6 sees λόγοι as 'themes, subjects' and μῦθοι as 'tales'. Marcovich 1978: 9 argues that μῦθος refers to the content and λόγος to the verbal expression of the hymn; Gentili and Prato (1979: *ad loc.*) interpret μῦθοι as 'prayers' and λόγοι as 'narratives'. Meijer 1981: 222 takes the phrase to denote 'pious words and pure thoughts'; his view of the meaning of λόγος seems anachronistic. Ford 2002: 55 translates as 'with reverent speech and purified tales', takes the pairing of εὐφήμοις μύθοις and καθαροῖσι λόγοις as 'pleonastic, since *muthos* does not yet mean "false story"', and adduces examples from Parmenides and Empedocles, who offer μῦθοι from a god. Ford deems Marcovich's suggestion to be 'importing a rhetorical distinction'. By juxtaposing μῦθοι and λόγοι, however, Xenophanes implies a distinction between the two. On *mythos* and *logos* in general, see Fowler 2011, who asserts (p. 56) that Xenophanes does not use these terms as synonymous, but 'the precise meaning of each word was, one presumes, obvious to the audience and is not recoverable to us'.

dysphemos mythos[23]): verses 21–2 of our text offer examples of such tales. Xenophanes elsewhere objects to Homer's and Hesiod's tales about the gods because these poets have 'attributed to the gods all sorts of things which are matters of reproach and censure among men: theft, adultery, and deceit',[24] and because they sang of numerous 'lawless deeds of the gods'.[25] These tales could be classified as blasphemous stories (*dysphemoi mythoi*), slanderous and shameful narratives, which ought to be rejected; *euphemoi mythoi* would be stories presenting the gods in positive light. Following this line of argument, εὔφημος μῦθος in our text implies a process of selection from a repository of traditional tales, whereby a μῦθος would mean a 'tale about the gods'. It is hard to imagine the possibility of amending traditional *dysphemoi mythoi* so that they might become *euphemoi*: the 'tales about the gods' which should be the subjects of hymns are to be selected, not redacted. There are some blasphemous tales about the gods and there are some religiously correct tales, and, when performing a hymn, a man of well-disposed mind (εὔφρων ἀνήρ) should pick a religiously correct tale.

We now turn to the λόγος. Xenophanes characterizes this as καθαρός, implying that it is a type of speech which can be purified, and this presupposes the existence of a profane (*babalos*), maybe even of a polluted (*miaros*), narration (*logos*). What one can purify is the method of telling a story, the individual words and details one incorporates into the hymn—the means of telling a *mythos*.

Although it is difficult to know the exact extent to which Xenophanes essentially differentiated between a μῦθος and a λόγος in this context, the point he is making seems reasonably clear. The hymn must entail a good story about the gods, and one which is articulated in correspondingly pure speech: the gods are pure, and they must be hymned with pure words.[26] When selecting the topic of the tale and the words to use, one also should pay special attention to the occasion and to the setting of the performance: the occasion matters both for hymns and for sympotic poetry more generally. In selecting a proper topic and correct manner of narration for a hymn, one should use the principles of *euphemia* and purity; in this, the social occasion and the criterion of usefulness (τοῖσ' οὐδὲν χρηστὸν ἔνεστι, v. 23) should provide guidance.[27] Xenophanes is not rejecting the whole epic tradition here:[28] he is merely stating that some tales (such as those about battles among gods, vv. 21–2) are not appropriate for a hymn and might jeopardize

[23] See Gödde 2011: 385–400; her catalogue of attestations of *euphemia* and its antonyms records two instances of the term *dysphemia* (her nos. 4 and 9) and no uses of the term *blasphemia* before Xenophanes.

[24] Fr. B 11 DK tr. Lesher modified.

[25] Fr. B 12 DK: ἐφθέγξαντο θεῶν ἀθεμίστια ἔργα.

[26] The thought is in keeping with the general Greek ideas about hymns, which were supposed to mirror the character of the god presently hymned. On this, see I. Petrovic 2013.

[27] Marcovich 1978: 11–14 and Ford 2002: 53–66.

[28] On purification interpreted as literary criticism, see Ford 2002: 56–8, with bibliography.

the purity of the ritual setting. In this third step, Xenophanes moves on to the metaphysical purity and links it inextricably with *euphemia*, thus championing a more abstract and more complex concept of ritual purity.

Similarly, the complexity of his religious thought and the move from the tangible towards the abstract is evident in his conceptualization of proper prayer. After providing instructions on the hymn, Xenophanes outlines the content of the εὐχή ('prayer', vv. 15–17) for the εὔφρονες ἄνδρες. The recommended prayer should ask 'for the ability to do just deeds, for these things are certainly more within reach, not (acts of) hubris'. Scholarship has seen the object of this prayer as being original and innovative, since the prayer does not specify particular favours, as was otherwise customary, a phenomenon Henk Versnel calls *Gebetsegoismus*.[29] Richard Reitzenstein draws a parallel to Ion's prayer to Dionysus ('Give me long life . . . and to drink, and to play, and to be mindful of just things (καὶ τὰ δίκαια φρονεῖν), and Miroslav Marcovich also to Hipparchus' famous maxim inscribed on a herm ('Go and be mindful of just things')).[30] Marcovich, concurring with Karl Reinhardt, objects that possessing the capacity to think a just thing is not the same as possessing the ability to perform it (vv. 15–16, δύνασθαι πρήσσειν); instead, he sides with Konrat Ziegler's view that the wording implies a prayer for the possession of the intellectual capacity to choose the right thing to do: 'By stressing the need for divine assistance in a man's moral decision-making . . . Xenophanes radically differs from the authors of the traditional prayers.'[31] Andrew Ford, on the other hand, places the prayer in the context of 'conventional aristocratic piety', and stresses its similarity to ideologies expressed in archaic *skolia*, short poems performed in sympotic context.[32]

In our view, Ford correctly emphasizes the aristocratic context of the prayer; furthermore, we detect in it a distinct Pythagorean resonance. Xenophanes' instruction that men should pray for the ability to do generalized 'just things' appears to be among the earliest attestations of an idea which would become very significant in philosophical circles. Jon Mikalson discusses a wide range of Greek philosophical attitudes to prayer, demonstrating that Plato, Xenophanes, and Aristotle, who even wrote a book on prayer,[33] criticized the common habit of praying for things such as health, wealth, marriage, family, good (even famous!) children, safety, fortune, crops, and the like. Instead, the philosophers point out that one should not pray to the gods for specific things:[34] one should only pray for good things,

[29] Originality of Xenophanes' prayer: see Pulleyn 1997: 209–10; *Gebetsegoismus*: Versnel 1981: esp. 17–21.

[30] Reitzenstein 1893: 50; Marcovich 1978: 8; Fr. 1 (26) 15–16 West; Pl. *Hipparch*. 229a.

[31] Marcovich 1978: 8; Reinhardt 1916: 127–8; Ziegler 1965: 293. This kind of divine assistance is requested also in Theognis' prayer which we discuss in Ch. 6.

[32] Ford 2002: 60. [33] D.L. 5.22.

[34] Mikalson 2010: 46–55. On the various wishes expressed in ancient Greek prayers, Versnel 1981.

and leave it to the gods to decide what these may be. As we have mentioned earlier, the first Greek philosopher to whom this idea was attributed was Pythagoras.[35] In the tenth book of his *Libraries*, Diodorus Siculus offers an account of Pythagoras' views (10.9.8):[36]

> ὅτι ὁ αὐτὸς ἔφασκε δεῖν ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς ἁπλῶς εὔχεσθαι τἀγαθά, καὶ μὴ κατὰ μέρος ὀνομάζειν, οἷον ἐξουσίαν, κάλλος, πλοῦτον, τἄλλα τὰ τούτοις ὅμοια· πολλάκις γὰρ τούτων ἕκαστον τοὺς κατ' ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτῶν τυχόντας τοῖς ὅλοις ἀνατρέπειν.
>
> [Pythagoras] used to say that it was necessary in prayers to pray simply for the good things, and not to name them individually, such as, for instance, to pray for power, beauty, wealth, and other similar things. For often each of these things, when those who desired them acquire them, turning against them, totally ruins them.

The similarities between Pythagoras' and Xenophanes' ideas are the recommendation that one should avoid specific requests in prayers, and the notion that one should pray for only one thing: in Pythagoras, 'the good'; in Xenophanes, 'the just'. Xenophanes' addition of *οὐχ ὕβρεις* (v. 17) reinforces the view that specific objects of prayer should be avoided, and further excludes hubristic wishes. This suits the context of the aristocratic symposium, in which we may well imagine individuals praying for the destruction of their enemies,[37] as attested in Solon's prayer to the Muses[38] or in Archilochus.[39]

Diodorus cites another Pythagorean saying, also adduced previously,[40] which further elevates the ability to pray correctly to the sphere of the illuminated, wise men (10.9.7):

> ὅτι ὁ αὐτὸς ἀπεφαίνετο τοῖς θεοῖς εὔχεσθαι δεῖν τὰ ἀγαθὰ τοὺς φρονίμους ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀφρόνων: τοὺς γὰρ ἀσυνέτους ἀγνοεῖν, τί ποτέ ἐστιν ἐν τῷ βίῳ κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἀγαθόν.
>
> For he himself [Pythagoras] disclosed that wise men should pray to the gods for the good things for the benefit of the unwise, since the unwise are incapable of understanding what in life is truly good.

We therefore suggest that Xenophanes' verses 15–16 modify Pythagorean ideas about correct prayer.[41] Xenophanes was not only Pythagoras' contemporary, he was also familiar with his teaching: in a fragmentary jibe, Xenophanes

[35] Mikalson 2010: 48. For discussion of this type of prayer, see Ch. 2.

[36] On D.S. 10.9.3–8 and its reliability, see Ch. 2, pp. 64–5.

[37] Burkert 1985: 75 notes that the Greeks 'had no qualms about praying for another's destruction'. Prayers for revenge and for the ruin of others are curses, and they are widely attested in the ancient Greek world. On offensive, indecent, and improper prayers, Versnel 1981: 21–6.

[38] Fr. 13.5–6 West. [39] Fr. 26 West. [40] Ch. 2, p. 63.

[41] Mikalson 2010: 50 discusses the Platonic premise that, in order to be able to pray correctly, one should know what justice is (*Alc. 2* 150b1–3), and points out that the idea of praying for the ability to do the just thing is found in Xenophanes, but he does not point out the similarity with the Pythagorean precepts.

mocks some implications of metempsychosis.[42] The extent to which Xenophanes' verses coincide not just with Diodorus' but also with Neoplatonist reports of Pythagoras' views is remarkable. In fact, it has been observed that verse 24 of our poem shares similarities with the content of Pythagorean prayers as reported by Iamblichus and Porphyry.[43] The impression of Pythagorean influences on Xenophanes was so strong that Hans Herter went as far as to suggest that Xenophanes' elegy was perhaps composed for performance in a *thiasos* of Eleatic philosophers.[44] This idea has been rejected, and, as Marcovich and Ford point out,[45] the setting of Xenophanes' elegy must have been an aristocratic symposium. Furthermore, historiographical issues also limit our confidence in drawing parallels with Neoplatonist passages, since their reliability is debatable.[46]

If verses 15–16 of Xenophanes' elegy do, as we believe, pick up on Pythagorean guidelines about the correct form of prayer, the similarities, as well as the differences imposed by the nature of the intended audience, are revealing. There is some mileage in comparing Pythagoras' narrow circle of the wise, who know what is good, with Xenophanes' audience of aristocratic εὔφρονες ἄνδρες. Xenophanes may well have taken the idea from Pythagoras and adjusted it to the social context of his addressees: both circles are exclusive and elitist, and as Ford stresses, the point of the aristocratic symposium was to assert cultural distinction.[47] Philosophers know what is good, so they can pray for good things. Aristocrats, however, should know what is just, for they are the ruling class, and their task, as memorably outlined by Hesiod, is to vouch for, maintain, and distribute justice.[48] At a symposium, an aristocrat ought to have a well-disposed mind, hymn with pure words, and pray to be able to do what is just.

Significantly, the basis of purity and correct mental disposition in the ritual context is correct thinking about the gods, as is outlined in the fourth step of Xenophanes' gradation. Men of well-disposed mind (*euphrones andres*) must use pure words to address the gods, but in order to be able to do that they

[42] The vast majority of scholars agree that Xenophanes' Fr. B 7 DK is about Pythagoras, but the exact target of the ridicule remains a matter of discussion. See Lesher 1992: 79–81; both Zhmud 2012: 30–2 and Cornelli 2013: 89–93 provide up-to-date bibliography on the issue.

[43] Iamb. *VP* 100: ἔτι πρὸς τούτοις περί τε τοῦ θείου καὶ περὶ τοῦ δαιμονίου καὶ περὶ τοῦ ἡρωικοῦ γένους εὐφήμιόν τε <εἶναι> καὶ ἀγαθὴν ἔχειν διάνοιαν (= Porph. *VP* 38). 'And in addition to this, that one should practice *euphemia* and have a good mental disposition towards the divine, daemonic, and heroic race.'

[44] Herter 1956: 37 and 48, followed by Defradas 1962: 363–5 with even more enthusiasm. Marcovich 1978: 16 calls for caution, rightly so in our view.

[45] Marcovich 1978: 16, rejecting the Pythagorean connection; Ford 2002: 58–60, allowing for the Pythagorean flavour of the final line.

[46] On Iamblichus and Porphyry as sources for Pythagoras, Zhmud 2012: 73–7. On Diodorus as a source for Pythagoras, see our discussion, Ch. 2.

[47] Ford 2002 *passim*, and esp. Chs. 1–3.

[48] See Ch. 1, pp. 44–7.

need to hold particular beliefs about the gods.[49] In the ritual context, Xenophanes' *euphron* unites doing and thinking what is religiously correct.[50]

This is made obvious in step four (vv. 19–24), where blasphemy is juxtaposed to the correct religious attitudes. Xenophanes picks up on the motif of the mind of the ritual participants (*εὔφρονας ἄνδρας*, v. 13), and elaborates the thought with a general remark about the state of religious reverence these men should be in—not just in a sympotic environment, but generally, always (v. 24): *θεῶν <δὲ> προμηθείην αἰὲν ἔχειν ἀγαθήν* ('One should always hold the gods in good consideration'). By highlighting the significance of *prometheia* ('foresight', 'consideration'), Xenophanes intimates that a complete, all-pervasive ritual purity and *euphemia* are ultimately rooted in the mind, in good thinking about the gods. 'Holding the gods in good consideration' represents the fundamental basis of piety, which is in the context of religious ritual demonstrated through careful attention to purity, not only of space and implements, but also of tales and words. The nexus of justice, physical and metaphysical purity, and correct mental disposition in the ritual context which we have already observed in Hesiod and Pythagoras seems, therefore, present in Xenophanes' poem as well.

[49] Bowra 1938: 123 goes some way towards this when he compares Xenophanes' elegy with Euripides, *Ion* 94–101, and argues that 'the underlying idea in both passages is that physical cleanliness is a preparation for moral cleanliness'. Bowra 1953: 12 reiterates the comparison and goes a step further: 'To regard physical and moral purity as aspects of the same thing was a fundamental tenet of Greek religious thought, but Xenophanes surely goes beyond any predecessor in his application of the idea to the contents of songs. This was his special contribution, and he stated it emphatically.'

[50] In this sense, this remarkable concept represents a forerunner of the explicit articulation of the idea that inner purity is based on one's *phronein hosia*. On *phronein hosia*, first attested in tragedy, see 'Electra' in Ch. 10 (pp. 228–35), and 'The Language of Inner Purity and Pollution' in the Conclusion chapter (pp. 268–80).

6

The *Theognidea* on Straight Minds and Moral Purity

Summary: Poetry ascribed to Theognis displays a keen interest in discussing moral goodness and badness. In the *Theognidea*, the noun *νοῦς* denotes the seat of moral character and the adjective *katharos* is used in a markedly moral sense. We discuss the request to Apollo to 'straighten the tongue and mind' in the context of the sympotic prayer (vv. 756–64), and argue that it amounts to a request for *euphemia* and inner purification. For Theognis, religious and social behaviour are intrinsically entangled, which is evident in further passages in which he refers to a true friend's pure mind, *katharos nous* (v. 89) and to inner purity as a permanent state resistant to outward pollutants (vv. 447–52).

The poet Theognis, his period of activity, and even his home-town present a riddle for modern scholars. For Isocrates, Plato, and Xenophon, Theognis was a poet from Megara and an author of elegiac verses.[1] For some modern scholars, Theognis is a legendary character, closer in nature to Orpheus or Musaeus than to Pindar or Bacchylides: he has been variously labelled as a 'phantom and a legendary character';[2] as a mirage;[3] and as 'a cumulative synthesis of Megarian poetic traditions'.[4] For those who argue that the poet was a historical figure, the dating of his life and work remains problematic: Martin West dates the beginning of his career to 630 BC;[5] Douglas Gerber places his birth in 580–570 BC;[6] Hendrik Selle, the author of the latest comprehensive study of Theognis' poetry, places his birth between 615 and 560 BC and his death between 585 and 480 BC.[7]

The transmitted collection of two books of Theognis' elegies includes poems which most scholars agree are very likely to be Theognis' own, but it also contains verses of other elegiac poets, such as Solon, Mimnermus, and Tyrtaeus.[8] It is generally agreed that the initial part of the collection

[1] Pl. *Men.* 95c–e; *Lg.* 629a–630c; Xen. *Smp.* 2.4–5; Isoc. *Ad Nicocl.* 42–4.
[2] Wendorff 1909: 30, 33, 41. [3] Edmunds 1997: 46. [4] Nagy 1985: 33–4.
[5] West 1974: 65–71. [6] Gerber 1997: 121–3. [7] Selle 2008: 26–7.
[8] On the collection, West 1974: 40–64, followed by Bowie 1997. For a short and clear overview, Gerber 1997: 117–20 and Gagné 2013: 249–51.

(vv. 19–254) comprises poems by Theognis. However, two of the poems of interest for our study (vv. 447–52 and 757–64) fall in the second part of the collection. Furthermore, the second poem (vv. 757–64) also causes the greatest difficulties with dating. It mentions 'fear from the Persian war' (v. 764), which can reflect either the Persian capture of Lydia and the Greek cities of Asia Minor in mid-sixth century BC, or the looming Persian invasions of the Greek mainland in the 490s and 480s BC; the poem can therefore be dated either to the mid-sixth or to the early fifth century BC.[9] The latter would imply that it is by a later Megarian elegist; the earlier dating, on the other hand, would imply that the lines might be Theognis' own. If the two fragments of the *Theognidea* which mention the Persian threat are not by Theognis but by a later Megarian poet, he nevertheless draws on Theognidean ideas and presents himself as a part of the same tradition. This allows us to treat the corpus as sharing a common ideology and religious concepts to a large extent, or more generally, as an articulation 'of social values contained in [Megarian poetic] traditions'.[10] For the sake of convenience, and without any commitment on our part as concerns authenticity, we refer to the author as Theognis and to the collection as the *Theognidea*.

Like most early elegy, the *Theognidea* were performed in a sympotic context. As is appropriate for such a context, Theognis displays a vivid interest in moral virtue and baseness. In the *Theognidea*, the noun *νοῦς* is used to denote the seat of moral character and the adjective *katharos* is regularly employed for inner purity and moral excellence. In the following passage, the *Theognidea* features a speaker who declares himself to be in a state of permanent and absolute purity (vv. 447–52):[11]

> εἴ μ᾽ ἐθέλεις πλύνειν, κεφαλῆς ἀμίαντον ἀπ᾽ ἄκρης
> αἰεὶ λευκὸν ὕδωρ ῥεύσεται ἡμετέρης,
> εὑρήσεις δέ με πᾶσιν ἐπ᾽ ἔργμασιν ὥσπερ ἄπεφθον
> χρυσὸν ἐρυθρὸν ἰδεῖν τριβόμενον βασάνῳ, (450)
> τοῦ χροιῆς καθύπερθε μέλας οὐχ ἅπτεται ἰός
> οὐδ᾽ εὐρώς, αἰεὶ δ᾽ ἄνθος ἔχει καθαρόν.
>
> If you wish to wash me, unpolluted and clear water
> will always flow from the top of my head,
> and you will find that I am in all activities like refined yellow gold
> to behold, when tested by a touchstone.

[9] Van Groningen 1966: 296 leaves the issue of dating open, and claims that, concerning the chronology, nothing can be gathered from this poem. Gerber 1997: 122 argues that the verses are more likely to refer to Xerxes' invasion in 480/479 BC, which means that Theognis either lived to an extremely old age or the poem is a work by some other, later Megarian poet. Selle 2008: 237 allows for both the mid-sixth- and the beginning of the fifth-century datings.

[10] Cobb-Stevens et al. 1985: 2. On the Theognidean corpus as a reflection and articulation of the values and concerns of social elites, Papakonstantinou 2004.

[11] We quote the text after Young's edition (Teubner,1971).

Its very surface is never darkened by patina
nor decay, but always has a pure shine.

The speaker proclaims himself to be like gold, the purest of metals, impervious to any pollution and in no need of washing. He uses the terms regularly associated with purification (*plynein*, 'to wash'; *amiantos*, 'unstained'; *katharos*, 'pure') figuratively, in order to stake a claim to moral excellence.[12] In effect, his excellence amounts to a complete and all-pervasive moral purity, and makes bodily purification by washing obsolete. Hence, the adjective *katharos* of the final line is not to be understood literally, that is, it does not point to the process of purification. Rather, it refers to the incorruptible moral character, and the whole poem expresses the idea that no pollution clings to those who are virtuous. This idea, that moral excellence shields one from pollution and makes purification next to obsolete, however, will in fact be adopted at a much later point by Greek sacred regulations concerned with rights of entry to sanctuaries.[13]

The *Theognidea* champions a strongly idealized vision of a strict aristocratic moral code in which religious and social norms are merged together. To be an *agathos* means to live a life of religious and social blamelessness, to have a pure and straight *nous*, which is permanently subjected to both social and divine scrutiny. The quest for such a *nous* is attested in the *Theognidea* both in the religious context of a prayer and in the social context, where it is used to denote a true and loyal friend. Let us first turn to the religious context, as presented in the sympotic prayer to Apollo (vv. 757–64):

Ζεὺς μὲν τῆσδε πόληος ὑπειρέχοι αἰθέρι ναίων (757)
αἰεὶ δεξιτερὴν χεῖρ' ἐπ' ἀπημοσύνῃ,
ἄλλοι τ' ἀθάνατοι μάκαρες θεοί· αὐτὰρ Ἀπόλλων
ὀρθῶσαι γλῶσσαν καὶ νόον ἡμέτερον. (760)
φόρμιγξ δ' αὖ φθέγγοιθ' ἱερὸν μέλος ἠδὲ καὶ αὐλός·
ἡμεῖς δὲ σπονδὰς θεοῖσιν ἀρεσσάμενοι
πίνωμεν, χαρίεντα μετ' ἀλλήλοισι λέγοντες,
μηδὲν τὸν Μήδων δειδιότες πόλεμον.

May Zeus who lives in the sky hold his right hand
above this city here to keep it safe from harm,
and the other immortal blessed gods: moreover, may Apollo

[12] See on this passage also 'Inner Purity and Pollution: Religious Categories or Metaphors?' in the Conclusion chapter (pp. 288–91).

[13] Classical formulation of the idea is that of *AP* XIV 74.1–2: *οὐδὲ καθαρμῶν χρειώ· τῆς ἀρετῆς ἥψατο οὐδὲν ἄγος,* 'neither am I in need of purifications, for no *agos* clings to *arete*'. Similar expressions: *AP* XIV 71; Totti 1985, no. 61, with Petrovic and Petrovic 2016. It should be noted, however, that these regulations are transmitted in literary sources, and while they show some affinities with epigraphic material, no extant epigraphic sacred regulation expresses the idea with the same urgency. We discuss this material in Volume II.

> guide aright our tongue and mind.
> Let the lyre and the pipe now again sound forth the sacred song;
> having made full drink offerings to the gods,
> let us drink, talking with each other about pleasant things,
> and not fearing the war against Persians.

As in Xenophanes' Fr. 1 DK, the starting point of this narrative is the moment at which the meal has been completed and preparations for the symposium have been brought to their end.[14] Those participating in the symposium have eaten, washed their hands, put on wreaths, and are about to perform the libations and sing the hymn. Before the libations and the hymning, a prayer is uttered. Whereas Xenophanes provides the content of the prayer in his verses 15–17, Theognis' entire poem is the prayer.

The addressees of Theognis' prayer are Zeus, all the Olympian gods, and Apollo. Zeus is addressed as *Soter* ('Saviour'), as is customary in a sympotic context. The object of the prayer is the protection of the city,[15] and Zeus is asked to extend his right—that is to say, his well-disposed—hand over the city in an act of safeguarding (*ἀπημοσύνη*). The term *apemosyne* is relatively rare, but the few transmitted examples reveal that it tends to appear in poetic texts and that it is closely associated with prayers.[16]

What, however, is the role of Apollo in this poem? Apollo is also invoked in verses 773–81, the only other poem in the *Theognidea* which mentions the Persian threat.[17] Since Apollo was the patron deity of Theognis' native city, Megara,[18] and is mentioned as helping to build the city walls (vv. 773–4), the prayer for the city's salvation, as we might expect, is addressed to him, and the request is very concrete: to 'ward off the hubristic Persian army from this city.'[19] In verses 757–64, however, the prayer to Apollo has a different content: he is invoked in order to 'straighten/guide right our tongue and mind,' *ὀρθῶσαι γλῶσσαν καὶ νόον ἡμέτερον* (v. 760). What does this request to Apollo entail? We first revisit the function and religious role of *nous* in the

[14] The similarity in setting and themes between Xenophanes' Fr. 1 DK and this passage from *Theognidea* have been often discussed. See Seng 1988; Ford 2002: 61–2. On the symposium as a religious ritual, see Ch. 5 on Xenophanes.

[15] The fact that Zeus, rather than Apollo, is invoked as the protector of the city need not imply that the poem is not set in Megara, as some have argued: see van Groningen 1966: 293 on v. 757.

[16] In an inscriptional epigram from Paros from the sixth century BC, the dedicators express their gratitude for the *ἀπημοσύνη* which Artemis has bestowed upon them in accordance with their prayers (*IG* XII, 5 215 (= *CEG* 414) with Bowie 2010: 347-8; a second-century (or earlier) BC inscriptional epigram employs this word in a prayer for protection addressed to Osiris (*IG* X, 2 1 108, with ll. 6–10); van Groningen 1966: 293 remarks that *ἀπημοσύνη* is a 'substantif rarissime', and takes it to denote 'absence de douleur.'

[17] The same problem of chronology pertains to vv. 773–81 as well; West 1974: 65.

[18] On Theognis' homeland and, in relation to this, the ancient and modern discussions over which Megara was meant, see Gerber 1997: 121 and Selle 2008: 27–36.

[19] vv. 775–6: *αὐτὸς δὲ στρατὸν ὑβριστὴν Μήδων ἀπέρυκε / τῆσδε πόλευς*.

Theognidea in order to argue that this prayer effectively constitutes a prayer for the purification of *nous*. [20]

In the Theognidean corpus we can detect a consistent idea about *νοῦς* as the seat of moral character.[21] In several passages a sharp distinction is made between *νοῦς* and *γλώσσα*. The narrator sees the fact that words can be different from what is in one's mind as a grave problem (v. 367), so he stresses that someone 'can be a friend in words only' (v. 63).[22] Those who have command both of *νοῦς ἀγαθός* and of *γλώσσα* are rare (vv. 1185–6). Since words and mind can be different, humans do not know each other's minds: the narrator announces that a lying *νοῦς* is 'the most counterfeit thing that the gods have made for mortals' (vv. 121–4). Correspondingly, Theognis connects good *νοῦς* with justice, and bad *νοῦς* with *ἄδικα ἔργα* ('unjust deeds').[23]

As a contrast to this human uncertainty about each other's minds, Theognis juxtaposes the gods, who 'know the mind of men' (vv. 897–900). This is most evident in the narrator's invocation of Zeus (vv. 373–400), where this god is described as the one who knows the minds of humans well,[24] and the narrator is perplexed as to why he holds sinners and the just in the same esteem (vv. 379–80):

> *ἦν τ' ἐπὶ σωφροσύνην τρεφθῇ νόος ἦν τε πρὸς ὕβριν*
> *ἀνθρώπων ἀδίκοισ' ἔργμασι πειθομένων;*
>
> Whether the mind of men is directed towards prudence, or to hubris since (those) men rely on unjust deeds?

Here we notice the use of *τρέπομαι* ('to be directed') with *νοῦς*. 'Directing towards' prudence is the characteristic of morally good and religiously correct men. The opposite of such men are the unjust and hubristic people. In the next passage, we note that Theognis thinks of a 'just mind' as being 'straight' (vv. 395–6):

> *τοῦ μὲν γὰρ τὰ δίκαια φρονεῖ νόος, οὗ τέ περ αἰεί*
> *ἰθεῖα γνώμη στήθεσιν ἐμπεφύῃ·*
>
> For the mind of that man thinks just (thoughts), and indeed for eternity a straight thought has been implanted into his chest.

[20] The function of the prayer in Theognis is similar to Hesiod, *Op.* 737–41, see Ch. 1. We agree with Ford 2002: 62, who argues that Apollo is asked to 'purify their speech and thought', since 'this call for ritual correctness suggests that "speaking gracefully among each other" may somehow help keep the Medes at bay'. Van Groningen 1966: 293 on v. 760 argues that the prayer asks Apollo to act as a god of order and to save the orderly sympotic gathering from the consequences of intoxication.

[21] Darcus 1977: 48–51 persuasively argues that *νοῦς* is perceived as 'locus of moral character' in Hesiod, Solon, Simonides, and Theognis.

[22] On friendship in Theognis, Konstan 1997: 49–52; on friendship and duplicity in Theognis, Donlan 1985.

[23] On Theognis and justice, Lloyd-Jones 1971: 47.

[24] v. 375: *ἀνθρώπων δ' εὖ οἶσθα νόον.*

On the basis of these passages, it follows that in the *Theognidea* morally good and religiously correct people are concerned with justice and have 'straight' thoughts.[25] If concerns for justice and 'straightness' characterize a good *νοῦς* in Theognis, then the prayer to Apollo in verses 757–64 is a prayer for moral goodness and religious correctness. To 'straighten the thought' means to get rid of that which makes it crooked—hubris and moral defilement—and, effectively, to achieve inner purity. As the 'straight mind' points towards socially and religiously correct thought, we can also say that the 'straight tongue' points towards correct speech. It is, therefore, attractive to think of verse 760, *ὀρθῶσαι γλῶσσαν καὶ νόον ἡμέτερον*, as the articulation of a request for *euphemia* and religious and social correctness, both of which are fundamental to the symposium as a religious and social ritual. Furthermore, the mention of 'sacred song' in the next line (v. 761) and libations (v. 762) reinforce the religious significance of these phrases.

As in Xenophanes' Fr. 1 DK, in the Theognidean sympotic prayer the alignment of words and thoughts, which in effect amounts to purification, represents a preparation for direct engagement with divinities. 'Our' (*ἡμέτερον*, v. 760) could refer either to the narrator alone or to the whole sympotic gathering. We think that the latter is a more plausible interpretation: the prayer extends to the whole sympotic company, not just to the narrator, because, according to Theognis, one *is* the company he keeps: in verses 35–6 the poet warns Cyrnus that associating with the *kakoi* will lead to the loss of his *nous*. By being in company with good men, one learns moral goodness,[26] whereas being in bad company results in learning bad actions, blasphemy, and hubris.[27] Bad company, as depicted in verses 305–8, is the exact opposite of Theognis' sympotic image (vv. 757–64), where straight words and straight thoughts are paired with pious ritual actions, such as prayer, libations, and hymning.

We now turn to consider *νοῦς* in its social context. As we noted earlier, Theognis employs *nous* almost exclusively in the moral sense. According to manuscripts, in verses 1185–6 we encounter 'good mind and speech':

> *νοῦς ἀγαθὸς καὶ γλῶσσα· τὰ δ' ἐν παύροισι πέφυκεν* (1185)
> *ἀνδράσιν, οἳ τούτων ἀμφοτέρων ταμίαι.*

[25] Theognis' alignment of justice with straight thoughts is indebted to Hesiod's *Works and Days*, where Zeus is, already in the invocation, represented as 'making straight what was previously crooked' (v. 7) and is represented as a divine guarantee and embodiment of justice. See on this Nagy 1990: 69–71 and 1995. For Theognis' views on morality as a reflex of his social standing and aristocratic values, Papakonstantinou 2004, with bibliography.

[26] vv. 33–5.

[27] vv. 305–8: *τοὶ κακοὶ οὐ πάντες κακοὶ ἐκ γαστρὸς γεγόνασιν, / ἀλλ' ἄνδρεσσι κακοῖς συνθέμενοι φιλίην / ἔργα τε δεἰλ' ἔμαθον καὶ ἔπη δύσφημα καὶ ὕβριν / ἐλπόμενοι κείνους πάντα λέγειν ἔτυμα*, 'Not all bad people were born bad, but by establishing friendship with bad men, they learned bad deeds, blasphemous words and hubris, thinking that all they say is true.'

> A good mind and tongue: few men have both, few
> are those who treasure both.

The exclusive circle of the *agathoi*, aristocrats participating at the symposium, is limited to those who are in possession of 'straight' and 'good' *nous* and *glossa*. Mind and tongue must be 'good', that is, corresponding to each other and hence honest, which is an expression of inner purity. In fact, Theognis also employs the adjective *katharos*, 'pure', to qualify the morally good mind, *nous*:

> μή μ᾽ ἔπεσιν μὲν στέργε, νόον δ᾽ ἔχε καὶ φρένας ἄλλῃ, (87)
> εἴ με φιλεῖς καί σοι πιστὸς ἔνεστι νόος.
> ἢ μέ φίλει καθαρὸν θέμενος νόον, ἢ μ᾽ ἀποειπών
> ἔχθαιρ᾽ ἀμφαδίην νεῖκος ἀειράμενος. (90)
> ὃς δὲ μιῇ γλώσσῃ δίχ᾽ ἔχει νόον, οὗτος ἑταῖρος
> δεινός, Κύρν᾽, ἐχθρὸς βέλτερος ἢ φίλος ὤν.
>
> Do not love me with words, keeping your mind and thoughts elsewhere,
> if you love me and if you have a faithful mind.
> Either love me, having made your mind pure, or renounce me
> and hate me and quarrel with me openly.
> He who has a twofold mind and says one thing, he is a terrible
> friend, Cyrnus, and is better as an enemy than as a friend.

Here again we encounter the problem of a discrepancy between words and the mind—when they differ, danger lurks; when they are harmonious, one can be safe in the knowledge that one is either hated or loved. To make one's mind pure (v. 89, *καθαρὸν θέμενος νόον*) here means to have one's mind set on one consideration. The opposite to the 'pure' is a 'twofold' or 'divided' mind (v. 91, *δίχ᾽ ἔχει νόον*). In the context of social interaction, a divided, twofold mind is the most dangerous, whereas the pure mind is the best, both morally and socially.

We must, however, be wary of making sharp distinctions between the religious and the social context in Theognis, as the two are intimately linked. As we have seen already, the company one keeps can be morally beneficial or detrimental, and bad company results in hubris and blasphemy.[28] Accordingly, one's moral qualities determine and guide one's relationships with one's fellow men and with the gods, and one's relationships with one's fellow men can inspire divine rewards or punishments. The following passage illustrates the full complexity of the relationship between a man's *νοῦς*, his attitude towards justice, and his moral purity in Theognis' poetry (vv. 197–208):[29]

[28] *Thgn.* 35–6 and 305–8. For an overview of older arguments concerning the role of religion and morality in Theognis, van Groningen 1966: 454–9.

[29] Gagné 2013: 258–67 offers a thorough analysis of this poem and compares it to Solon's *Elegy to the Muses*.

χρῆμα δ' ὃ μὲν Διόθεν καὶ σὺν δίκῃ ἀνδρὶ γένηται (197)
καὶ καθαρῶς, αἰεὶ παρμόνιμον τελέθει.
εἰ δ' ἀδίκως παρὰ καιρὸν ἀνὴρ φιλοκερδέι θυμῷ
κτήσεται, εἴθ' ὅρκῳ πὰρ τὸ δίκαιον ἑλών, (200)
αὐτίκα μέν τι φέρειν κέρδος δοκεῖ, ἐς δὲ τελευτήν
ἄῤθις ἔγεντο κακόν, θεῶν δ' ὑπερέσχε νόος.
ἀλλὰ τάδ' ἀνθρώπων ἀπατᾷ νόον· οὐ γὰρ ἔτ' αὖτως
τίνονται μάκαρες πρήγματος ἀμπλακίας·
ἀλλ' ὅ μὲν αὐτὸς ἔτεισε κακὸν χρέος οὐδὲ φίλοισιν (205)
ἄτην ἐξοπίσω παισὶν ἐπεκρέμασεν·
ἄλλον δ' οὐ κατέμαρψε δίκη· θάνατος γὰρ ἀναιδής
πρόσθεν ἐπὶ βλεφάροισ' ἔζετο κῆρα φέρων.

The possession that comes to a man from Zeus, with justice
and purely, remains steadfast forever.
But if a man should obtain it unjustly, in the wrong moment,
with a greedy heart,
or having laid down an oath in perjury,
immediately he thinks that he made some profit, but in the end
it takes a turn for the worse, and the mind of the gods prevails.
But these things deceive the mind of the humans,
because the blessed ones do not punish sinful deeds immediately:
but one man paid his evil debt himself, and did not hang doom
over his children for later;
another yet was not caught up by justice, because ruthless death
sat itself on his eyelids, bringing perdition.

The possessions can come 'from Zeus, with justice and purely'. It is evident that here *καθαρῶς* denotes moral purity.[30] Therefore, in this passage we again encounter the nexus of purity, piety, moral correctness, and justice. Injustice is intrinsically connected with moral badness, and also with religious transgression and pollution. In the words of Renaud Gagné: 'The *ἀδίκως* of Theognis is the opposite of pure… The rotten greed of the transgressor is echoed in the impurity of his acquisition.'[31]

Delayed or immediate divine retribution is a consequence of *amplakia* (v. 204), an intentional error of the self.[32] Even though Theognis does not use the word, it is, in our view, evident that his *adikos*, unjust man, is *enages*, in the grip of divine *agos*. One of his transgressions is the breaking of the oath (v. 200, *εἴθ' ὅρκῳ πὰρ τὸ δίκαιον ἑλών*), which is a paradigmatic trigger of

[30] Van Groningen 1966: 77, in our view correctly, compares it to v. 89 (*καθαρὸν θέμενος νόον*), which he takes as denoting 'honesty'. Gagné 2013: 261 remarks: 'There can be no doubt that *καθαρῶς* here has some kind of ethical value. The "purity" mentioned in the text is neither completely objective, nor ritual—it involves intention.'

[31] Gagné 2013: 261. [32] On *amplakia*, see Ch. 4 on Empedocles, p. 87.

metaphysical pollution.[33] Injustice, greed, and breaking an oath all work in unison here. All provoke divine retribution, but the delay of this retribution prevents most people from understanding the true causes of divine anger, so their mind is misled (v. 203, *ἀνθρώπων ἀπατᾷ νόον*).[34] This last passage asserts that the gods are interested in human affairs and, as in other passages discussed above, that they can see into the minds of men and discern their true nature and motivations.[35]

This notion has direct repercussions for human social behaviour and moral attitudes: the willingness to set one's mind on the right path is stimulated by the understanding of divine interest in human affairs, and by the gods' ability to understand human minds. Therefore, humans should feel obliged, if they want to establish and maintain a beneficial relationship with divinities, to 'straighten' their minds and to live a morally good life. Turning back to the sympotic prayer to Apollo with which we began (vv. 759–60), this reinforces our reading of the plea for the god to 'guide aright/straighten our tongue and mind' as one for *euphemia* and *eusebeia* in the immediate context of the sympotic ritual. It may also encourage us to take this reading further, and to interpret the prayer as a more general request for lasting moral purity. For it is the lasting moral purity which is conceptualized as a defining feature of the *agathoi* who pursue just things, have their tongue and mind act in harmony with each other, and think straight, morally correct thoughts concerning both the human and the divine realms. The ability to do so is, according to Theognis, reserved only for the best men, true aristocrats, who are few in number. Effectively, according to the ideological outlook of the *Theognidea*, the striving for lasting moral purity provides a line of demarcation between social groups, a tool of distinction between the *agathoi* and the others (*kakoi*). For Theognis, then, inner purity is an ideologically charged concept embodying aristocratic moral and religious codes governing all aspects of the life of the *agathoi*.

[33] On the breaking of an oath, see Ch. 4, pp. 85–7. On the role of oaths in Theognis and in archaic judicial procedure, Papakonstantinou 2004.

[34] For a discussion of ancestral fault in the *Theognidea*, Gagné 2013: 249–74.

[35] vv. 375, 897–900.

Part IV

Inner Purity and Pollution on the Central Stage: The Evidence of Drama

7

The Tragic Outlook on Ritual

Preliminaries

Summary: The specific way that tragedy represents rituals, either as part of the plot or narrated by a character, enables audiences to reflect on the characters' motivations for performing a ritual, and on their consequences. Furthermore, as a genre tragedy displays a particular interest in the phenomenon of pollution, its seats, states, stages, manifestations, and its consequences. Tragedy is remarkably consistent in locating the seat and basis of pious behaviour in the *phrenes* (mind); it repeatedly draws its audience's attention to the importance of the mind as the ritual agent, and at times it is *phrenes* specifically that are represented as the seat or the origin of pollution.

Religious rituals play a pivotal role in tragic plots, and the poets explore the semantic potential of these rites by presenting them as simultaneously familiar and profoundly alienating.[1] Sacrifices, libations, prayers, oath-takings, and funeral and nuptial rites were all familiar to the audiences from their everyday experience, but in the world of tragedy they are often presented as dislocated and distant. Several factors contribute to this effect: chronological distance, since the events and characters in tragedy belong as a rule to the distant past (Aeschylus' *Persians* and Phrynichus' *Capture of Miletus* present notable exceptions); social distance, since tragedy focuses on the ruling classes of societies with political organizations markedly different from that of Athens; and finally, and most importantly, ritual acts are employed as plot

[1] For a comprehensive study of the role of ritual in tragedy, Sourvinou-Inwood 2003. Easterling 1993: 17 succinctly articulates the issue of proximity and distance in dramatic representations of ritual: 'What is represented in the theater is both like and unlike the life it purports to imitate: like, in that it offers images of the "real world"; unlike, in that by definition it is make-believe.' Parker 1983: 14–17 provides an insightful assessment and some words of caution regarding the use of the 'tragic world-view' for interpreting Greek religious phenomena. On the relationship of tragedy to Greek popular religion, Mikalson 1991; Parker 1997. Earlier scholarship was strongly influenced by Burkert 1966, who famously argued that tragedy uses the motif of sacrifice to explore the guilt and revulsion of killing. He took a broad view of ritual in tragedy, and argued that any sort of killing in tragedy may be termed *θύειν*. See Lloyd-Jones 1998 for a critique of Burkert.

devices rather than as means of interaction with the divine. By representing rituals in this way, tragedy explores their polysemic potential: their meaning is often probed, stretched to its limits, or distorted.[2] Nonetheless, in its dramatization of the rituals, however distant they might be from the 'here and now' of the audiences, tragedy does offer a unique view of ritual action and ritual actors, since it either spins ritual action into a narrative by presenting a character who reports about the performance of a ritual, or it dramatizes the rituals through performances on the stage and thus renders the ritual actors into characters in a narrative. By doing so, tragedy enabled the audience to observe a ritual not as an isolated event but as a part of a tragic plot, an episode or a major sequence in one whole narrative which has a beginning, middle, and end.[3] This enables tragedy to represent not only the ritual sequence, but also its outcome and consequences. For instance, when the Nurse supplicates Phaedra in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, her words and actions correspond to the acts of supplication from Greek religious life, yet her motivation for the ritual does not match the worshippers' motivations from the religious reality of the supplication. Nevertheless, Phaedra accepts the Nurse as a suppliant. What is essential for the understanding of the ritual's meaning for the plot of *Hippolytus* is not only the act of supplication itself, the 'middle' of the supplication narrative, but also its beginning (the Nurse's wrongful motivation for the ritual action) and particularly its end, the consequences of the ritual. The Nurse's abuse of the ritual will effectively cost both Phaedra and Hippolytus their lives.

By representing a ritual as a part of a larger narrative, the tragedians are able to explore the impact of the attitudes of the ritual actors on the outcome of the rituals, which is achieved by offering insights into the characters' states of mind, intentions, and disposition towards the acts performed. Remarkably, in tragedy, the outcome of the rituals often corresponds to the attitudes of the ritual performers.[4]

For this reason, we perceive the descriptions and representations of rituals in tragedy not as direct and impartial evidence for the historical reality of ritual mechanics, but as a meta-ritual discourse. The questions we put to this meta-discourse are: What is the role of the inner self in the depictions of rituals? What is the weight the tragic poets ascribe to purity and pollution? And what role do inner purity and impurity play in the tragic plots?

[2] Critics regularly speak of the 'perversion', 'subversion', or 'inversion' of ritual in drama; the precise way in which ritual's dramatic potential is realized in the context of a play can be determined only on a case-by-case basis, as Easterling 1993: 19 warns. For illuminating remarks on the 'abuse' of ritual in Aeschylus' *Ag*. and *Cho*., Seaford 2003: 100–1.

[3] To borrow the famous definition of *mythos* from Aristotle's *Poetics* (1450b23–5).

[4] Henrichs 1994/5: 64 importantly observes that: 'Invariably in tragedy, ritual remedies employed to gain undue advantage, to enhance one's social status, or to redress one ill by the commission of another ultimately prove ineffective and lead to a transformation of those who turn to them.'

More than any other genre, tragedy is concerned with the phenomenon of pollution.[5] All kinds of pollution and pollution-related problems feature prominently: divine wrath (*agos*); divinely sent madness as a pollution of the mind (*lyssa*, *ate*); different types of pollution as a result of bloodshed; pollution as a motivation for retributive killing; fear of the contagion of miasma; the questionable efficacy of purification. Notably, tragedians are especially keen to reflect on the phenomenon of pollution by presenting a set of characters, both human and divine, with different views of pollution. This is an especially prominent motif in the *Oresteia*, in Sophocles' *Antigone*, and Euripides' *Orestes* and *Hippolytus*. The entire plot of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* is famously based on the search for the origin of the complex pollution (*loimos*) which befell the city of Thebes. One of the paradoxes of this play is that someone can be gravely polluted and a source of danger for an entire community, without even knowing this himself. Tragedy sometimes depicts scenarios in which pollution beliefs are harnessed in order to uphold the moral code; it is pollution that provides a 'rule for determining *post hoc* whether infraction has taken place, or not',[6] such as, for instance, in Sophocles' *Antigone*, where Creon's decision to prohibit Polyneices' burial results in the pollution of the sacred altars.

Whereas other texts we analyse provide comments on an ongoing ritual performance, or general ritual instructions, and tend to focus on the obtaining of ritual purity, tragedy exhibits a unique interest in the various states, stages, manifestations, and, most importantly, consequences of pollution. The issues of ritual purity and pollution play a significant role for the outcome of the rituals and the plot-resolution. Perhaps the most complex case is Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, which traces the slow but formidable and ever more complex build-up of pollution through two generations of one family: from the unholy pollution of Agamemnon's mind as he decides to sacrifice his daughter (and a pollution which takes hold before the act is actually performed), to Clytaemestra's pollution as her husband's killer, to Orestes' entrapment between two equally horrendous pollution-scenarios, as he is threatened with a life of a polluted outcast if he fails to avenge his father, and then experiences the agony of complete engulfment in homicide-pollution as a result of matricide.

The characters' ritual action or their attitudes towards the rituals can also be employed as means of character-sketching. In Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, the Danaids flee from one ritual (marriage) and perform another (supplication), and the tension in the play is built by juxtaposing their pious and pure rituals with the impious and polluted minds of their persecutors. It is on the basis

[5] Parker 1983: 13–17.

[6] Douglas 1969: 133. On Douglas' views regarding the relationship of pollution beliefs and morality, see 'Methodological Outline' in the Introduction chapter (pp. 11–15).

of the two different groups' approaches to, and attitudes towards, ritual action that the audience experiences sympathy for the one group and condemns the other. Similarly, in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, it is the eponymous character's attitude towards a ritual at the beginning of the play that provides an assessment of his moral behaviour. His complete purity and piety are juxtaposed with his stepmother's, the Nurse's, and Theseus' abuse of rituals; he ends his life in complete purity, whereas all other main characters in the play are engulfed in pollution.

A further exceptional aspect of the way tragedy treats rituals is that, in some cases, it features a direct divine assessment of characters' inner attitudes and ritual actions by representing gods as characters in the play who observe and judge humans. The divine judgment of characters is often based on their inner disposition towards each other and the rituals. While Hesiod, for instance, issues general warnings that the gods see everything, even what is within the human mind, in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, where Artemis appears on stage, the goddess arrives in order to exculpate the eponymous hero by providing her unique, divine insight into his just mind, while condemning Theseus' bad mental state. Tragedy also features human characters who comment on their own and each other's actions, and it thus provides the audiences with a unique insight into the state of mind of ritual performers.

In depicting the inner state of ritual performers, tragedy is remarkably consistent in its use of terminology. It is the *phren* (φρήν, pl. φρένες, *phrenes*) that represents the seat of religious behaviour and 'dominates virtually all discussions of piety and impiety'.[7] Thinking and planning are often represented as necessary prerequisites for pious behaviour and for the correct performance of rituals, whereas a lack of thought or other errors of the mind lead to impiety, *dyssebeia*, and hubris.[8] In Aeschylus, for example, we encounter minds which are 'polluted', 'unholy', and 'impious': a man with such a mind sacrifices his daughter, or drags the suppliant away from the altar. Thinking badly (κακῶς) or 'too big' (μέγα φρονεῖν) equals hubris.[9] In Euripides, characters who 'think big' are represented as blasphemous: they refuse to perform rituals, and they are promptly punished by the gods. Thinking bad thoughts (or not thinking at all) results in the rash performance of rituals and the abuse of divine power, actions which the gods condemn as the transgressions of the κακοί. Sophocles' Creon, for instance, compromises the city's ritual communication with the divinities by prohib-

[7] Mikalson 1991: 178.

[8] For an overview of the role of the mind as a ritual agent in Greek tragedy, Mikalson 1991: 179–83.

[9] In tragedy, hubris is often represented as a direct consequence of faulty *phrenes*. For a comprehensive list of attestations, Mikalson 1991: 290 n. 110. For a general discussion of hubris, Fisher 1992. Cairns 1996: 10–17 argues that 'thinking big' and hubris are virtually interchangeable in tragedy.

iting a religious ritual in the *Antigone*, and his decision is represented as an error of the mind.

Such ritual transgressions or immoral thoughts render the mind (*φρήν*) polluted. Euripides qualifies Phaedra's incestuous love as a 'pollution of the mind'; his Menelaus has polluted *phrenes*, since he rejected a suppliant. Euripides' Electra thinks religiously incorrect thoughts when she spurs her brother on to commit matricide, but starts to think *ὅσια* once she repents.

The opposite of a bad, impious, polluted *φρήν*, which results in impiety, is often a safe and sound mind (*sophrosyne*, *σωφροσύνη*), which is the basic prerequisite of pious behaviour.[10] 'Piety is essentially "safe and sound thinking" about the gods.'[11] In the *Bacchae*, Teiresias' worship of Dionysus is qualified as 'safe thinking'; Pentheus' refusal to honour the god is *ἀφροσύνη*, 'lack of thinking'. Sophocles goes as far as saying that thinking is the first prerequisite for having *eudaimonia*, and that the gods love the *sophrones* and hate the bad. His *Oedipus Tyrannus* features a hymn to reverent purity in all words and deeds. Euripides' *Electra* features Castor, who announces that the Dioscuri do not come to aid the polluted but instead save those who cherish religious correctness and justice. Pollution is here juxtaposed with mental purity: correct thinking about the gods.

All of the tragedians explore their characters' motivations for ritual actions. By representing *phrenes* as the seat and basis of pious behaviour, and by commenting on the characters' state of mind before or during the performance of rituals, the tragedians draw the audience's attention to the importance of the mind as the ritual agent.

[10] For a detailed study of *sophrosyne*, Rademaker 2005; for a brief and informative overview of the role of *sophrosyne* in Greek tragedy, Mikalson 1991: 180–3.

[11] Mikalson 1991: 182.

8

Aeschylus on Mental Pollution

The Oresteia *and the* Suppliants

Aeschylus' extant tragedies stage a wide range of rituals, and some of his plays place particular emphasis on ritual purity. The most notable among these is the *Oresteia* trilogy, which explores human and divine motivation for ritual actions, human distortion of rituals, the disturbance and pollution of the mind associated with religiously incorrect acts, and ritual purification as a means of removing physical and mental pollution. The role of rituals in the *Oresteia* has been explored in depth elsewhere, and our present discussion does not treat each individual rite. Instead, we highlight the role of the mind as a ritual agent in Aeschylean tragedies, and focus on the impurity of the mind as a special form of pollution. Throughout his oeuvre, Aeschylus moves past contemplations on the formal aspects of traditional rituals to recurrently examine the religious correctness of the things uttered and the things thought in the context of ritual action. Issues of deliberation, motivation, and pensive assessment are fundamental to Aeschylus' conceptualizations of religious correctness, transgression, and the relationship between human and divine realms.

ORESTEIA, PERFORMED 458 BC

Summary: Aeschylus' *Oresteia* depicts a chain of retributive kin-killings which result in the physical and mental pollution of the murderers. We first discuss Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia, focusing on Aeschylus' characterization of Agamemnon's mind as a polluted, sacrilegious, and unholy ritual agent (*Ag*. 218–21). We then analyse Agamemnon's fatal misinterpretation of divinely sanctioned ordinances as a case of mental impurity.

Mental impurity in the form of madness is repeatedly described in the trilogy as a type of pollution brought about by the vengeful goddesses, the Erinyes; at

the same time, those who commit the murders in the plays repeatedly cite the removal of the pollution brought about by their victims as the motivation for their actions. However, the avengers themselves become affected by a particularly strong pollution because they have spilled kindred blood. Madness as a form of mental pollution affects Clytaemestra after the murder of Agamemnon, and Orestes after the murder of Clytaemestra. We focus on the case of Orestes, whose physical and mental pollution is depicted at the end of the *Libation-bearers* (vv. 1024–76) and remains a problem throughout the *Eumenides*. The *Eumenides* problematizes the cathartic rituals which were supposed to free Orestes from pollution; instead of staging the rituals, Aeschylus only offers recollections and testimonies of them. The central problem of the *Eumenides* is the status of Orestes, because it is perceived in radically different ways by two generations of gods: whereas Apollo and Athena perceive him as being purified, the Erinyes, spurred on by the ghost of Clytaemestra, pursue him and proclaim that he will never be purified, as it is not possible to purify one who has murdered his own mother. The Erinyes form the chorus of the *Eumenides* and act as the embodiments of pollution, threatening to strike Orestes with permanent madness. Orestes seeks divine protection and supplicates Apollo at Delphi, who performs the purification ritual, and then Athena at Athens, who temporarily protects him from the Erinyes, and then permanently liberates Orestes by instituting a court and establishing the Erinyes as the polis deities at Athens, to be venerated henceforth as the *Semnai Theai*. The divine dissent over the question of whether Orestes can be purified at all foregrounds the problematic nature of metaphysical, mental pollution as an invisible but threatening condition. This problem is all the more acute because the gods, who in Greek religion act as focalizers of purity and pollution, cannot reach an agreement on the issue. The conflict cannot be resolved as long as the Erinyes exist and there is no judicial system in place through which to gauge a homicide's mental state. The establishment of the Areopagus court is used to represent the changed attitudes towards miasma, which, in fifth-century Athens, coincides with increasing interest in the motivation for the homicide. By depicting the position of a family member in search of retributive justice before and after the establishment of the judicial system, the trilogy represents mental pollution as a concept which changes over time, and invites the Athenian audience to reflect on the nature and varying degrees of mental pollution.

Agamemnon's Polluted Mind as a Ritual Agent

In his depictions of rituals and pious conduct Aeschylus displays a keen interest in ritual correctness, and this is clear already from his treatment of the motif of religiously correct speech. *Euphemia*, its cognates, and its antonym (*dysphemein*, *dysphemia*), which are explicitly attested only thirteen

times in earlier authors, occur eighteen times in Aeschylus.[1] This abundance can be explained in part by the suitability of drama as a medium for accommodating and staging ritual action,[2] and by its plot structures and dialogical elements, which make it possible for interlocutors to qualify one another's speech. Aeschylus, however, is particularly interested in *euphemia* in conjunction with ritual, and he explores the full range of this term's meanings—the solemn silence, the ritual *ololyge*, and 'good speech' in both ritual and general contexts.[3] Rituals in Aeschylus' plays are often presented as being thwarted, corrupted, or perverted,[4] and *euphemia*, which his audiences would normally associate with hymning and purity of speech,[5] frequently becomes distorted. By presenting distorted frameworks, that is, by focusing on the motif of 'good speech' in horrible and gruesome contexts, Aeschylus invites his audiences to reflect not only on the words which it is religiously correct to utter, but on religious ritual in its entirety. The question which Aeschylus repeatedly raises is that of human contemplation about the ritual beyond the formalistic fulfilment of the requirements of *dromena*, 'the things done'—how do characters' words and thoughts in ritual context affect the ritual outcome, the notion of piety, and shape their relationship with the divine realm?

One telling and much-discussed example of this handling of ritual is Agamemnon's sacrifice at Aulis, which he performs to obtain the good winds that will finally allow his fleet to cross the Mediterranean and reach the shores of Troy.[6] According to the prophet Calchas, Agamemnon's daughter

[1] Gödde 2011 provides a discussion of *euphemia* in the Archaic and Classical periods, and lists all attestations of the term and its antonyms in the Appendix.

[2] Easterling 1993: 7–10.

[3] For a discussion of *euphemia* in Aeschylus, Gödde 2011: 95–148.

[4] For a pioneering, and still relevant, analysis of thwarted rituals in Aeschylus, see Zeitlin 1965: 465–505 (esp. 473–4 on libations of blood and wine framing the 'sacrifice' of Agamemnon). Zeitlin 1966: 645–53 discusses the ritual corruption of sacrifice in the *Oresteia* and its adoption of the concept of 'corrupt sacrifice' from the epic tradition (*Od*. 4.535 = 11.411). On the perversion of funeral rituals in *Agamemnon*, Seaford 1984; for the perversion of libations in the *Libation-bearers* 87–152, Seaford 1985, who lists further examples of corrupted rituals at p. 315; more generally on corrupted rituals in tragedy, Seaford 1989: 87–95 and 1994: 368–405 (esp. 371–8 on rituals in the *Oresteia*); for perverted blood-sacrifice, Henrichs 2000: 181–2. Goldhill 2004: 62–3 points out that 'there are seven acts of killing in the *Agamemnon*, and they are all pictured as a ritual, a corrupt sacrifice' (v. 65 (killings at Troy); v. 136 (killing of the pregnant hare); vv. 720 and 735 (lion-cub and lion-cub performing a kill); v. 1037 (Cassandra); vv. 1036–7 (killing of Thyestes' children); vv. 1056 and 1309–10 (Cassandra and Agamemnon). See also on thwarted rituals in Aeschylus, especially sacrifice: Henrichs 2012: 180–94. Burkert 1966: 119–21 and Lloyd-Jones 1998: 293–6 discuss sacrifice as a leitmotif of the *Oresteia*. On the perversion of *euphemia*: Gödde 2003: 38–9.

[5] For instance in *Supp*. 694–7, where, following a prayer to Zeus, the chorus of Danaids encourages the singers to perform 'a song of good words at the altars' and to let the singing accompanied by the phorminx resound from 'ritually pure mouth'.

[6] See Henrichs 2012: 183–9 for an excellent recent discussion.

must be sacrificed in order for the ships to be set in motion.[7] Agamemnon deliberates whether he should (vv. 207–11) 'slay a child, delight of a home, polluting fatherly hands with streams of a maiden's blood close to the altar',[8] or return home and spare Iphigenia's life. This second option is briskly rejected, and the chorus, which is composed of the elders of Argos, describes Agamemnon's decision in the following words (vv. 218–21):

> ἐπεὶ δ' ἀνάγκας ἔδυ λέπαδνον,
> φρενὸς πνέων δυσσεβῆ τροπαίαν
> ἄναγνον, ἀνίερον, τόθεν
> τὸ παντότολμον φρονεῖν μετέγνω.[9]

> Since he plunged (his head) into the yoke of necessity, he had a change in the spirit of his mind [literally: "he blew the alternating wind of the mind"], impious, polluted, unholy (wind); from that moment on he changed his mind completely and thought that he could do anything.

In order to understand why Agamemnon is represented as having a polluted and impious mind, we need to address the question of his moral accountability. How culpable was Agamemnon for his daughter's death, and where are the limits of his responsibility?[10] Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice Iphigenia is often compared with *Iliad* 19.86–8, where Agamemnon rejects any responsibility for the quarrel with Achilles, explaining that Zeus, Moira,

[7] On the prophecy, Nussbaum 1986: 32–4, with an insightful analysis of previously proposed interpretations.

[8] *εἰ / τέκνον δαΐξω, δόμων ἄγαλμα, / μιαίνων παρθενοσφάγοισιν / ῥείθροις πατρῴους χέρας πέλας βω- / μοῦ*. The text of the *Oresteia* follows D. L. Page's 1972 edition, with modifications after Sommerstein's 2008 edition indicated where applicable.

[9] The punctuation in the passage cited follows Sommerstein 2008.

[10] In an important paper, Helm 2004 revisits the thorny issue of Agamemnon's motivation for the sacrifice. He argues persuasively that Aeschylus adds piety to the traditional ruinous sequence *koros–hubris–ate* advanced by Solon, and he examines the genealogical metaphors for human virtues and vices in Aeschylus, concluding that the genealogy of human vices in his tragedies is presented as a sequence comprising (pp. 23–33): folly *(anoia*), impiety (*dyssebeia*), arrogance (*hubris*), and rash behaviour (*thrasos*), resulting in ruin (*ate*). The positive genealogy accordingly consists of (pp. 33–8): good sense (*phronesis*), piety (*eusebeia*), prudence (*sophrosyne*), and justness (*dikaiosyne*), resulting in prosperity (*olbos*). He discusses the multiple levels of motivation operating in the *Oresteia*, and provides a reassessment of all important previous views on Agamemon's sacrifice of Iphigenia (pp. 40–4). We follow Helm's conclusion: Agamemnon *did* have a choice, and this is why (p. 42) 'the chorus describe his decision in some of the worst value terms available: *dussebê*, *anagnon*, *anieron*'. Helm, however, sees Agamemnon's insanity as the reason for his decision (p. 43), adducing *Ag*. 222–3 and 799–804 as further evidence for this. We disagree on this last point, and we argue that Agamemnon was not struck by insanity, but that he displayed bad judgment. We discuss *παρακοπά* later in this chapter. In vv. 799–804, it is not Agamemnon's madness that the chorus sees as the cause of his mistake, but that 'he did not manage well the rudder of his mind': *οὐδ' εὖ πραπίδων οἴακα νέμων* (v. 802). This implies bad judgment and a faulty decision-making process, rather than madness. On this passage see also Nussbaum 1986: 43–4.

and the Erinys had placed savage delusion (ἄτη) in his mind. Hugh Lloyd-Jones has famously argued that Zeus gave Agamemnon no possible alternative and took away his judgment, which is why he acted impiously.[11] According to Lloyd-Jones' interpretation, the curse of Atreus determined Agamemnon's fate: Zeus used him as an instrument of vengeance upon Troy, while, at Aulis, Artemis acted as a partisan of Agamemnon's enemies and demanded blood for blood; Agamemnon could not refuse the sacrifice. Finally, Clytaemestra acted as an instrument of Zeus' destructive purpose and killed Agamemnon. David Raeburn and Oliver Thomas have recently argued in a similar vein, adducing *Iliad* 19.86–8 as an important parallel.[12] Reading the Aeschylus passage through an Iliadic lens, they have pointed out that the mention of παρακοπά in v. 223, which they interpret as 'sideways knock', implies the appearance of an external force which shakes its victims from their senses.

Indeed, if we view this scene as an allusion to *Iliad* 19 and interpret παρακοπά (*parakopa*) as implying a divine intervention, then Agamemnon appears to be less culpable for his daughter's murder. However, according to this line of argument, it would follow that it was divine influence which polluted Agamemnon's mind and rendered it impious. If we consider Aeschylus' passage independently, there is no indication that Agamemnon's mind was influenced by the divine, since verses 218–21, quoted above, focus squarely on his staggeringly impious decision, on the impurity and impiety of his mind. On this reading, Agamemnon himself decided to act impiously, and he polluted his own mind by making the wrong decision. Support for this interpretation can be sought in a closer examination of the noun *parakopa* in verse 223.

παρακοπά is first attested in Aeschylus, and it is customarily rendered in translations as 'frenzy' or 'infatuation'. It appears in the chorus' general comment on human behaviour as they broaden the perspective from Agamemnon to all mortals (vv. 222–7):

> βροτοὺς θρασύνει γὰρ αἰσχρόμητις
> τάλαινα παρακοπὰ πρωτοπήμων.
> ἔτλα δ' οὖν θυτὴρ γενέ-
> σθαι θυγατρός, γυναικοποί- (225)
> νων πολέμων ἀρωγὰν
> καὶ προτέλεια ναῶν.

Wretched infatuation/frenzy (παρακοπά) which fosters bad designs (αἰσχρόμητις) and is the first cause of disaster (πρωτοπήμων) emboldens mortals.[13] He dared

[11] 1962 = 1983. [12] Raeburn and Thomas 2011: xxxviii–xxxix.

[13] Raeburn and Thomas 2011: 92 translate: 'For shameful-counselling brazen derangement, first cause of woe, emboldens mortals', and argue that 'this sentence adds a further level of motivation (though not an exoneration) since the Greeks considered such "derangement" to be sent by the gods', adducing *Il.* 19.86–144 as 'an obvious comparandum'. We agree that this is an obvious

> to become the sacrificer of his daughter, to aid the war of revenge for a woman and as an offering for the voyage of the fleet.[14]

In this passage, *παρακοπά* is qualified by the adjective *aischrometis*—a *hapax* meaning 'fostering or forming base designs'[15]—and is further designated as *protopemon*, the cause and 'originator of bane' for humans. This bane is labelled as *πῆμα* (the second element in the compound *πρωτοπήμων*), which is indicative of the concepts of destruction and pollution, here caused by a bad decision.[16] Agamemnon's decision is thus clearly labelled as the original cause of destruction and as the source of his pollution.

On the basis of this, we read *παρακοπά* as denoting Agamemnon's religiously incorrect conception of what *θέμις* (normally, 'what is religiously correct') is, rather than as divinely inspired madness. In putting an end to his dilemma concerning the sacrifice of Iphigenia, Agamemnon is governed by the concerns of the army, and he proclaims that it is *θέμις* to sacrifice his daughter, *θυσίας παρθενίου θ' αἵματος … ἐπιθυμεῖν θέμις*.[17] The proclamation

comparandum, but we argue that it is the difference, not the similarity, that is highlighted by the juxtaposition of *Ag.* 222–3 and *Il.* 19.86–7.

[14] The word *προτέλεια* may allude to the pre-nuptial rituals, see Raeburn and Thomas 2011: 92.

[15] LSJ, s.v.

[16] *πῆμα* also features in a later cathartic regulation as a designation of pollution and impurity which bars an individual from entering a sacred space (*I.Lindos* II, 487.25 = *LSS* 91.25 (the words addressing the visitor at the entrance of the temple of Athena Lindia): *εἰ δέ τι πᾶμα φέρ(ε)ις, τὸν ἀπάμονα κάλλιπε νάον*, 'if you carry any bane [pollution] on you, leave the blameless [pure] temple'). In the ritual context, the term *πῆμα* is closely associated with the notion of universal impurity—that is to say, both physical and metaphysical impurity; see Petrovic and Petrovic 2016.

[17] *Ag.* 214–17: *παυσανέμου γὰρ θυσίας / παρθενίου θ' αἵματος ὀρ- / γᾷ περιόργῳ σφ' ἐπιθυ- / μεῖν θέμις. εὖ γὰρ εἴη*. Raeburn and Thomas 2011: 91 translate: 'It is right that they [the allies] should desire a wind-preventing sacrifice and a maiden's blood with an extremely passionate passion.' The text is difficult, and West 1990: 178–81 proposes a different reading. We follow the translations of the passage offered by Raeburn and Thomas and Sommerstein 2008. Nussbaum 1986: 32–8, 41–7 provides an insightful reassessment of Agamemnon's moral dilemma, and translates vv. 214–17 (p. 35): 'For it is right and holy (*themis*) that I should desire with exceedingly impassioned passion (*orgai periorgōs epithumein*) the sacrifice staying the winds, the maiden's blood.' This translation—which Nussbaum defends at p. 431—is the linchpin of her argument: Agamemnon, faced with a choice of alternatives (obedience to a divine command or the sacrifice of his own daughter), chooses the lesser ill (to sacrifice Iphigenia), but he is to blame because he begins to 'cooperate inwardly with necessity, arranging his feelings to accord with his fortune. From the moment he makes his decision, itself the best he could have made, he strangely turns himself into a collaborator, a willing victim' (p. 35). We agree with some of the points she makes: Agamemnon is culpable, and he does not seem tortured by the decision he has made; he justifies not only his action but also his passion for it. Nussbaum does not discuss any divine intervention which might have impeded Agamemnon's deliberation. She stresses that vv. 224–7 further assert that the chorus held Agamemnon to be fully culpable (p. 36): 'He dared (*etla*) to become the sacrificer of his own daughter' (v. 225), and emphasizes: 'not just *became* but endured to become. He put up with it; he did not struggle against it.' Lawrence 2013: 71–88 arrives at a similar conclusion: Agamemnon was not deranged or insane; he is culpable because he does not appear to experience remorse or regret after the sacrifice and bases his decision on his status as a general, rather than as a father. Lawrence considers

that this horrendous sacrifice is religiously correct is, on the one hand, a temporary self-deluding act, since, as verses 207–11 have already shown, Agamemnon is well aware of the impending pollution which the blood on his hands will incur. On the other hand, the sacrifice of his daughter is a clear religious transgression, and Agamemnon pairs this transgression with a blasphemy: something which is quintessentially religiously incorrect has been proclaimed to be correct, and the term παρακοπά brings this to the fore. The meaning of θέμις has been stretched and perverted by Agamemnon, and the chorus uses another clear term to underscore this blasphemy and the error in Agamemnon's characterization of his action. When the chorus designates as a παρακοπά what Agamemnon has just labelled as θέμις, it does so in order to reveal and comment on Agamemnon's religious deviance and intentional deceptiveness.[18]

The aspect of intentional deceptiveness is ingrained in the term itself: παρακοπά is a cognate of the verb παρακόπτω: to perform a false cut or a false/incorrect stroke, 'to falsify', 'to cheat' or 'swindle out of a thing'.[19] This is the very opposite of θέμις. In a nutshell, the chorus designates Agamemnon's use of θέμις, his proclamation of what is religiously correct, and the decision he made as a forgery. In addition, further qualifications in this passage signpost Agamemnon's incorrect religious attitude—his religious error 'fosters bad intentions' (v. 222); it is 'the original source of bane' (v. 223). Verses 224–5 also comment on and illustrate the παρακοπά, the perversion of religious rituals, and Agamemnon's transformation from a father to an infanticide: he *dared* (ἔτλα) not only to sacrifice but even to become the sacrificer himself (θυτὴρ γενέσθαι θυγατρός). The swift sequence of the sacrificing action, which Aeschylus describes at verses 228–47, with Agamemnon in total command, issuing orders and orchestrating the rite, further confirms this.

In contrast to *Iliad* 19.86, where Agamemnon famously denies all responsibility for his action and states: ἐγὼ δ' οὐκ αἴτιός εἰμι ('I am not to blame'), the chorus' comment in *Agamemnon* stresses the role of his *metis*, his thinking (v. 222, αἰσχρόμητις), in the decision-making process. Understanding παρακοπά as the misinterpretation of θέμις, and taking the whole passage into consideration, the sequence of events as described by the chorus is as follows:

the possibility of παρακοπά signifying the curse of Atreus or the will of Zeus, but posits that the text does not support either option. Instead, he sees it as a 'deluded mental state' which enabled Agamemnon to completely identify with one role to the exclusion of the other (p. 80). Lawrence tentatively suggests that if the curse of Atreus was at play, it would have worked through Agamemnon's inherited character (*ethos*), which could have tipped the balance in favour of the sacrifice at Aulis (pp. 82–3); if divine influence was at play, it 'intensifies his readiness to perform the sacrifice rather than subverting his rationality' (p. 88).

[18] Or, if we follow Nussbaum's 1986: 32–8 argumentations, on his fatal self-delusion.

[19] LSJ, s.v. παρακόπτω.

1. The prophecy of Calchas (vv. 197–204).
2. Agamemnon deliberates whether to disregard the prophecy or to adhere to it, slay his daughter, and pollute his hands (vv. 205–11), concluding that both options are bad.[20] This dilemma is initially presented from his perspective. He recasts the problem, this time presenting it from the perspective of the army, and outlines the alternatives as follows: to become a deserter and lose his allies (vv. 212–13), or to do what the army desires, for it is *θέμις* ('religiously correct' or 'right in the eyes of the gods') that they should long for a sacrifice of virginal blood to end the winds (vv. 214–17). He concludes (v. 217): *εὖ γὰρ εἴη*, 'may all be well'. At no point is it implied that Agamemnon had no choice or that the divine influenced his thought-processes; on the contrary, Aeschylus makes the shifting logic of his deliberations apparent. Agamemnon wants to see his decision as *θέμις*, but the following lines (vv. 219–27) emphasize that it was anything but right in the eyes of the gods.
3. Agamemnon decides to sacrifice Iphigenia—he 'plunged (his head) into the yoke of necessity' (v. 218).[21] During his deliberations he was aware that spilling Iphigenia's blood would pollute his hands (vv. 209–11). Now that he has made his decision to kill her, his *mind* is polluted, impious, and unholy (vv. 219–21).
4. The chorus comments on this decision by pointing out Agamemnon's *παρακοπά* in conceptualizing *θέμις*. Agamemnon's delusion is not the result of an external action of the divine, but of his own thinking, which has made him characterize—and *this* is his *παρακοπά*—a human sacrifice performed to fulfil the needs of the humans as *θέμις*. By planning to pollute his hands, Agamemnon has polluted his own mind and made it impious and unholy.
5. Agamemnon becomes the sacrificer, and the sacrificial ritual takes place.

Agamemnon's mental disposition is described in unequivocal ritual terms, and the description of the horrendous human sacrifice follows the stages of an animal sacrifice, yet it distorts every stage. Instead of piety (*εὐσέβεια*) and ritual purity (*ἁγνεία*) as necessary prerequisites for the performance of a sacrifice, Agamemnon is impure, impious, and unholy in his mind. His daughter cries for help (vv. 228–9), but she is snatched and held firmly while the prayers are uttered (v. 231, *μετ' εὐχάν*). These prayers, the purity of the victim, and the action of lifting the victim towards the altar (vv. 232–3) recall

[20] The wording of vv. 205–11 already suggests that even contemplating the sacrifice is impious: Iphigenia is described as *δόμων ἄγαλμα* in v. 207. The word *ἄγαλμα* is often used to designate the statues of the gods.

[21] This does not mean that he was compelled and that he had no choice. Helm 2004: 42–3 argues *contra* Denniston and Page 1957, and demonstrates—persuasively, we think—that Agamemnon 'put on' the yoke himself, which implies that he made the choice.

the ideal animal sacrifices offered to the gods, which were supposed to use perfect specimens, unblemished and especially decorated for the occasion.[22] Aeschylus' focus on the customary stages of traditional sacrificial rituals further highlights the transgressive and impious nature of this ritual.

Iphigenia is slaughtered, and the narrator focuses on the fact that her mouth is gagged so that she may not curse the house (vv. 235–8). All that she can do is attempt to glance at the gathering in a silent plea for help (v. 240–2), because there was once a time when she performed a different role in the communal religious rituals: she used to sing the hymns for those who are now sacrificing her. This recollection, introduced by ἐπεὶ πολλάκις (v. 243), underscores the ritual perversion and *Verfremdung* set against the backdrop of sacrifice and *euphemia*. Not only is the sacrificial victim a human and a daughter, but her piety and purity are of the highest grade. Iphigenia's past performances of a hymn to Zeus the Saviour at the beginning of the symposia held in her father's house are described as the actions of a pure virgin, who honoured her dear father with a good-omened paean performed 'with a ritually pure voice' (v. 245, ἔμελψεν, ἁγνᾷ δ'… αὐδᾷ). The mention of this voice brings the narrative of the perverted sacrifice to its climax. Notably, Aeschylus devotes a dozen lines (vv. 206–18) to describing Agamemnon's mental deliberation, and he then has the choir qualify his decision as 'impious' in no uncertain terms (vv. 218–27). By so doing, Aeschylus stresses that Agamemnon was fully accountable for a murder and responsible for ritual perversion, and the characterization of his mind in ritual terms—impure, unholy, impious—underlines this.

Madness as Mental Pollution and Murder as a Purification Ritual

As Robert Parker has convincingly argued, in the case of homicide religious contamination and legal sanctions are intertwined to such an extent that it is hard to differentiate between the two.[23] A penalty for some forms of homicide was exile, which Athenian authors also describe as a form of purification. In cases of homicide, circumstances and intention play a pivotal role in determining the grade of the pollution and the gravity of the punishment. In this sense, Aeschylus' trilogy explores and reflects critically on the religious and legal implications of homicide by presenting a series of extremely complicated kin-killings. Every murderer in the *Oresteia* claims to act justly or as an avenger; the pollution inflicted by the victim is an often-repeated

[22] On blood-sacrifice we refer to a small selection of the most relevant recent contributions: Graf 2002: 113–25; Bremmer 2007; Ekroth 2008; Naiden 2013. For the way in which the victims are represented in ancient Greek texts and for images depicting human sacrifice, Bonnechere 2013.

[23] Parker 1983: 104–43.

explanation for the motivation behind their action. Some murderers claim, or can even demonstrate, divine support; some rely on Olympian divinities venerated in cult; others rely on the Erinyes, avenging spirits who were familiar from literature but who lacked a state cult. Aeschylus' presentation of these horrific murder purifications had no direct bearing on Athenian law and ritual of the mid-fifth century BC, but it did bring into the public arena a series of important questions regarding culpability, appropriate punishment, and the role of the mind and intention in assessing what is just and religiously correct.

At the beginning of the trilogy, the story about a thwarted sacrifice is introduced by focusing on the decision of an impious, polluted mind. The sacrifice of Iphigenia, in essence a sacrilegious kin-murder,[24] sets in motion a chain reaction of killings which are similarly represented as sacrifices. In the first instance, impurity of the mind was the agent leading to the travesty of the ritual; in the subsequent kin-murders this impurity of mind is represented as a consequence of the crime and as a divine punishment for it. A ritual is needed not only to purify the hands of the murderers polluted by kindred blood, but also to purify their minds.

Clytaemestra's Murderous Intent and Resulting Inner Pollution

When describing the sacrifice of Iphigenia, the chorus of *Agamemnon* first mentions the physical miasma that will cling to the hands of the murderer, Agamemnon (vv. 208–11), and then highlights his mental pollution, which occurred as soon as he decided to sacrifice his daughter (vv. 219–21). As we argue above, in this case inner pollution precedes the deed, and it originates in the mind. Towards the end of *Agamemnon*, Clytaemestra proudly announces that she has killed her husband (vv. 1372–94), and she asserts that Agamemnon, having sacrificed his own child, should have been driven from the land as punishment for the polluted deed (v. 1420, *μιασμάτων ἄποιν'*). However, instead of exile, Agamemnon is murdered by his own wife. By killing her husband, though, Clytaemestra brings miasma upon herself, and she herself is, from that moment on, described as polluted and as polluting the house.

Significantly, Clytaemestra and Aegisthus freely admit to planning the murder that Clytaemestra committed.[25] This makes both of them fully culpable

[24] Zeitlin 1965: 498 labels it as an 'impious profanation of ritual communication with the gods'.

[25] Aegisthus explains his deed as just and as a reparation for Atreus' killing of Thyestes' children, Aegisthus' young brothers (vv. 1577–614). On the motif of ancestral fault in the *Oresteia*, see now Gagné 2013: 394–416, who demonstrates that the characters in the trilogy present discordant views on it, and concludes that 'there is no analytically coherent ideology of inherited guilt or ancestral fault in the *Agamemnon*, and certainly no doctrine somehow taught to the city by Aeschylus' (p. 406).

in the eyes of Athenian homicide law, according to which planning a murder is as grievous a crime as perpetrating one.[26]

In Aeschylus' representation, however, a fulfilled murderous intent carries consequences for the murderer's inner state. In his depiction of the consequences of homicide, Aeschylus often focuses on a resulting disturbance of the mind or madness,[27] and so, after the murder of Agamemnon, the chorus expects Clytaemestra to lose her sanity (vv. 1426–8):

> περίφρονα δ' ἔλακες· ὥσπερ οὖν
> φονολιβεῖ τύχᾳ φρὴν ἐπιμαίνεται.
> λίβος ἐπ' ὀμμάτων αἵματος ἐμπρέπει.
>
> You have shouted arrogant words, just as now your mind is going mad by the act of your blood-spilling. Drops of blood are clearly visible in your eyes.

Bloodshot eyes are one of the typical signs of madness in Greek texts, and the phenomenon is simultaneously a symptom of derangement and the explanation of its cause.[28] Aeschylus' focus on Clytaemestra's bloodshot eyes conflates the physical aspects of homicide-pollution with the inner, mental (*phren*) pollution, which takes the form of madness. The reason for Clytaemestra's inner pollution is her murderous intent; the cause is the spilt blood; the manifestation of her inner pollution is madness; and fear and terror are its symptoms. And so, at the beginning of the *Libation-bearers*, Clytaemestra's night-terrors are mentioned (vv. 32–41). The dream-interpreters declare that this fear in the night has been sent to her 'from beneath the earth', and that its origin is the fury of her victims (vv. 40–1). In later texts, too, both madness and fear are consistently depicted as being inflicted by the Erinyes on those who have committed murder.[29]

In Aeschylus, however, the situation is additionally complicated by his introduction of a character who faces one and the same affliction (madness as a consequence of pollution) irrespective of his course of action. Without doubt, the character in the *Oresteia* who is the most threatened and affected by madness is Orestes. When he appears at Agamemnon's grave in the *Libation-bearers*, he explains to Electra that Apollo had personally ordered him to kill Clytaemestra as a vindication of his father's murder (vv. 269–305). It is evident from Apollo's menacing words to Orestes, however, that even if he had refused to murder Clytaemestra, he would still have lived as an individual

[26] Harris 2006: 391–404.

[27] The belief that a killer can go mad is widely attested in Greek texts, see Parker 1983: 128; Padel 1992: 175–9; Padel 1995: 147–9 and 191–3.

[28] On bloodshot eyes and madness, Padel 1992: 60 with n. 31, and 61 with n. 36; Hoessly 2001: 112 with n. 60.

[29] On the Erinyes inflicting punitive madness, Padel 1992: 175–9.

polluted by homicide:[30] the punishments for not committing the deed are identical to those for kin-killing. Apollo discloses that there is a miasma generated by the blood of Orestes' father and brought about by the Erinyes (vv. 283–4), and that it will pollute Orestes in body and mind. Orestes would suffer greatly before eventually dying—he would first be struck by physical afflictions (vv. 280–2);[31] he would then be assaulted by the Erinyes with madness (v. 288, *λύσσα*), night-terrors (v. 288, *μάταιος ἐκ νυκτῶν φόβος*), and derangement (v. 289, *κινεῖ ταράσσει*). He would eventually be expelled from the city (v. 289) and excluded from communal rituals (v. 291–4: symposia, *xenia*, and public altars), and would live a life virtually exiled from human contact. Orestes' paradoxical position is that he is threatened with death, illness, the Erinyes, and exile if he does *not* commit the murder, but, following the matricide, he is still pursued by the Erinyes, who bring madness upon him, force him into exile, and threaten further punishments.

Orestes acts at the behest of Apollo, with the full support of the chorus and his sister; he explains his motivations as just retribution and the purification of his home from the miasma brought about by the killers. The killing of Clytaemestra and Aegisthus continues to be represented in this way—as a just retribution, a ritual purification, and a divinely sanctioned act—throughout the play. The crucial fact that the duo had planned their crimes and had been fully aware of their actions is stressed in a choral segment focusing on Aegisthus' *φρόνημα* and Clytaemestra's *φρένες* (vv. 585–652).[32] The chorus even jubilantly declares Orestes' impending matricide to be an act of ritual cleansing (vv. 965–8):

> *τάχα δὲ παντελὴς †χρόνος†*[33] *ἀμείψεται*
> *πρόθυρα δωμάτων, ὅταν ἀφ' ἑστίας*
> *πᾶν ἐλάσῃ μύσος*
> *καθαρμοῖσιν ἀτᾶν ἐλατηρίοις.*
>
> Soon the time (?) that accomplishes all will pass through the door of the house, when it will have chased away from the hearth all pollution by means of purification that drives out the banes.[34]

Orestes, sent by Apollo, the god of purity, is unambiguously presented as a purifier and a righteous avenger. His personal tragedy is that he could not avoid pollution even though his very act was represented as a 'removal of

[30] Hoessly 2001: 108–31; Sommerstein 2008: 250.

[31] Hoessly 2001: 112 with n. 62 identifies the disease described in Apollo's oracle as leprosy.

[32] On Clytaemestra's impiety in the *Oresteia*, Helm 2004: 45–6.

[33] The reading *χρόνος* is disputed; see Sommerstein 2008: 336–7 for an overview of the discussion. Lafontaine's conjecture *πρόμος*, 'the prince', does not change anything substantial in our interpretation.

[34] Edition: Sommerstein 2008. The joint impiety of Clytaemestra and Aegisthus is also stressed at *Ch.* 377–8, where their hands are described as 'not religiously correct': *χέρες οὐχ ὅσιαι.*

miasma'. In addition to the religious motivation, Orestes makes a case which would sit well with the Athenian fifth-century BC audience. He presents his killing as justified from the Athenian legal perspective, since he qualifies his killing of Clytaemestra and Aegisthus as an assassination of two tyrants (v. 972–3),[35] the murderers of his father, who had committed their crime in a devious and treacherous way (vv. 976–96). Furthermore, by describing his mother as a viper with an audacious and unjust mind (vv. 993–6, esp. 996, *τόλμης ἔκατι κἀκδίκου φρονήματος*),[36] he alludes to her act of homicide as a premeditated and unjustifiable murder.

Nevertheless, after the killing of Clytaemestra, Orestes immediately realizes that he has acquired 'dreary pollution from his victory' (v. 1017, *ἄζηλα νίκης … μιάσματα*). His intention is to follow Apollo's commands and go to Delphi, fleeing the kindred bloodshed as an exile (vv. 1021–43). His miasma is already realizing itself as madness, however, and Orestes, paradoxically, fully understands that he is going mad: at line 1024, he states that his *φρένες* are *δύσαρκτοι*, 'hard to govern', and while still coherent, he proclaims that he killed his mother 'not without justice' (1027), since she was hated by the gods and since she was the polluted murderer of his father (v. 1028, *πατροκτόνον μίασμα καὶ θεῶν στύγος*).

The disturbance of Orestes' mind is represented as a horrific hallucination in which frightening creatures begin to swarm around him in greater and greater numbers. These creatures look like Gorgons and are 'thickly wreathed with serpents' (vv. 1048–50), and they seem to drive him away (v. 1050, *οὐκέτ' ἂν μείναιμ' ἐγώ*). It now becomes clear that Orestes has no choice in the matter: he *must* leave Argos, because the Erinyes are chasing him out.[37] In his opinion, they are 'obviously the hostile dogs of his mother' (v. 1054). Aeschylus makes it clear that the visions are a direct consequence of matricide: having described his mother as a viper and a serpent, Orestes is now tormented by terrible women wreathed in serpents, whom he perceives as the dogs of his mother. The chorus, too, has no doubt about the origins of Orestes' madness (vv. 1055–6):

> *ποταίνιον γὰρ αἷμά σοι χεροῖν ἔτι·*
> *ἐκ τῶνδέ τοι ταραγμὸς ἐς φρένας πίτνει.*

The blood is still fresh on your hands, this is why your mind is disturbed.

[35] Seaford 2003: 100–1 investigates the motifs associated with the tyrannical behaviour of Clytaemestra and Aegisthus in Aeschylus, and demonstrates that Orestes had good reasons to label them tyrants. On justified homicide in the Athenian legal system, see our discussion in 'From Inner Pollution to Sound-Mindedness' in this chapter (pp. 155–65).

[36] Sommerstein 2008: p. x points out that Aeschylus alludes to an etymological link between *Κλυταιμήστρα* and *μήδομαι*, 'scheme', 'contrive': *Ag.* 1100–2 and *Ch.* 991. See also Garvie 1986: 223 on *Ch.* 648–52, on the etymological significance of *Κλυταιμήστρα*; Garvie also points out that Clytaemestra is already called *δολόμητις* at *Odyssey* 11.422.

[37] In Greek culture, madness was associated with both demonic persecution and wandering, Padel 1995: 102–6.

As in the case of Clytaemestra's bloodshot eyes (*Ag.*, vv. 1426–8), the chorus provides the diagnosis for Orestes' mental pollution and locates its cause in the blood of the victim. After asserting that Orestes' pollution is both physical and mental, the chorus announces that there is a cure (vv. 1059–60):

> εἷς σοι καθαρμός· Λοξίας δὲ προσθιγὼν
> ἐλεύθερόν σε τῶνδε πημάτων[38] κτίσει.
>
> There is one means of purification for you, the touch of Loxias [Apollo] will make you free of these afflictions.

The second instalment of the trilogy ends with Orestes in the throes of physical and mental pollution, but with the assurance that he will be completely purified and released from his sufferings in Delphi. This certainty is dispelled in the final play, where the anxiety of miasma, physical and mental pollution, and the problematic nature of catharsis are developed in full.

Orestes' Purity and Pollution: Two Divine Perspectives

The first two tragedies in the *Oresteia* are brimming with rituals: almost every scene in *Agamemnon* and *Libation-bearers* is a dramatization of a ritual, a description of a ritual, or both.[39] The terrible chain of murders, which started with the sacrifice of Iphigenia and continued with the murders of Agamemnon and Cassandra (staged as a sacrificial ritual, and justified by the perpetrator as a penalty for and purification of miasma), has reached its pinnacle in the killing of Aegisthus and Clytaemestra, which Orestes committed as a vindication and catharsis of his home. Now everything hangs on the cathartic ritual which should deliver Orestes from the bodily miasma of blood and the mental miasma of madness. The great paradox of the trilogy is that this most important ritual, which should have brought to an end the vicious circle of murders and pollution, is not staged. The audience never witnesses the purification of Orestes—indeed, it is not even clear how many purification rituals Orestes has undergone before he reaches Athens—and this is one of the central problems of the *Eumenides*.[40] In what follows, we tackle this central issue in an attempt to disentangle the ways in which Orestes achieves his bodily and mental purification.

There are two perspectives on purity advanced in the *Eumenides*, those of Apollo and of the Erinyes, and these are contradictory and irreconcilable. Orestes' situation cannot be resolved until these two opposing viewpoints

[38] On *pema* as pollution, see n. 16.

[39] Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 231–50 provides an overview.

[40] The title *Eumenides* is not Aeschylus', and nowhere in the play are the Erinyes called 'Eumenides'. On the title see Braun 1998: 172–4. We use this title for the sake of convenience.

are publicly juxtaposed and weighed against one another. By placing these two different perspectives on purity alongside one another, Aeschylus dramatizes the anxieties surrounding miasma and purification. If metaphysical miasma is invisible, how can we know when it is gone? When blood has been cleansed by blood, what happens to the mind of the killer? How can the metaphysical stain be removed? Can purification even be performed in every case?

In a recent discussion of pollution, Robin Osborne points out that an important aspect of the phenomenon is that it is invisible, and that it is precisely the purification process that makes the invisible state visible. He posits that in some cases humans could not see one another's miasma, but they were convinced that the gods could: miasma was focalized, as it were, through the eyes of the gods.[41] Parker remarks that tragedy tends to address problems of miasma with more urgency than any other genre, and that it is characteristic of tragedy to present divergent views on whether individual characters are ritually polluted.[42] In the *Eumenides*, Aeschylus offers the most radical destabilization of the phenomenon of miasma by presenting a situation in which it is a subject not only of human uncertainty, but even of outright divine dissension. Audiences are left to wonder exactly where and how Orestes was purified, while the gods, who should know for certain whether or not someone is ritually pure, fundamentally disagree over whether his purification has even taken effect. Aeschylus highlights the ambiguities and complications of miasma by inviting the audience to hear and see several perspectives on the issue, and to contemplate these by putting the problem on trial: instead of representing the silent drama of the purification ritual, Aeschylus stages the judicial procedure which reflects on the matter of miasma and purification in full.

The two opposing divine views on miasma presented during the trial are the Olympian and the chthonic: the young Olympian gods clash with the old, primeval Erinyes. In earlier literature, the Erinyes were represented as vengeful spirits, the embodiments of curses brought down by wronged parents or older relatives. They intervene to punish those infringing the established order, and they may also punish those who break oaths.[43] They are 'the animate agents of pollution who embody the anger of one slain by a kinsman'.[44] In the *Libation-bearers*, the Erinyes are first represented in Apollo's oracle to Orestes as the forces which will inflict on him the miasma of Agamemnon's blood crying out for vengeance. They act immediately after the murder of Clytaemestra, and they focus on Orestes' mind, rendering him insane. They push Orestes to insanity by instilling fear in his mind, and

[41] Osborne 2011: 158–85, and esp. 183–4.

[42] Parker 1983: 13–17 on pollution in tragedy, and 308–21 for a series of case studies.

[43] On the Erinyes, Parker 1983: 107, 109, 310; Sommerstein 1989: 6–12; Mikalson 1991: 214–17; Padel 1992: 164–92; Johnston 1999: 250–8.

[44] Parker 1983: 107.

Orestes' affliction is a sign of his mental pollution. Finally, in the *Eumenides*, the Erinyes act as a chorus representing the threat of pollution, and emphasis is again laid on their ability to inflict madness. We meet these goddesses at the beginning of the *Eumenides*, where, even asleep, they completely terrify the Pythia. Their vision of pollution is fundamentally different from that shared by Apollo and Orestes. Spurred on by the ghost of Clytaemestra, they wake up and accuse the god of purity himself, Apollo, of contaminating his own sanctuary by receiving Orestes (vv. 165–72). In the eyes of the Erinyes, Apollo acts in violation of divine law (v. 171, *παρὰ νόμων θεῶν*). Throughout the play they deny the possibility that Orestes has been purified, and they assert that they will follow him forever (vv. 174–7, 225, 307–86, 423). It is not only the Erinyes who profess this view in the *Oresteia*, however—other characters repeatedly assert that spilt blood can never be purified,[45] that it leads to pollution and illness.[46] It becomes clear that we are dealing with two fundamentally different, even opposed, concepts of pollution and purification when Apollo appears, accuses the Erinyes of being completely tainted, and chases them away from his sanctuary (vv. 179–97). It is the Erinyes who pollute Delphi, claims Apollo (vv. 194–5).[47]

It is at Delphi that we encounter Orestes as a suppliant at the beginning of the *Eumenides*. He is engulfed in physical and metaphysical pollution, and the Pythia sees the Erinyes surrounding him as he is sitting by the Omphalos, 'polluted in the eyes of the gods' (*θεομυσής*), his hands dripping with blood (vv. 40–2). Orestes holds a sword and an olive-branch adorned with wool, which marks him as a suppliant seeking purification.[48] This is the beginning of the ritual purification from homicide, as we find it described in other ancient sources.[49] Purification was performed by a priest or by an official of the community, and the purifying agent was the blood of a sacrificial animal. The killer had to remain silent and had to assume a submissive position of complete passivity; the purifier also had to remain silent until the end of the ritual.

Aeschylus, however, departs from the ritual rule. Rather than staging this cathartic ceremony, Aeschylus presents a conversation between Orestes and Apollo, in which Orestes pleads for help (vv. 85–7) while Apollo keeps the

[45] The chorus at *Ag.* 1019–21; the chorus at *Ch.* 48 and 72–4: 'If all the streams come by one way to purify a hand stained by murder with their flowing waters, they strive in vain.' Orestes at *Ch.* 520–1: 'Pour out all you have in atonement for one man's blood—and your work is wasted: so the saying goes.' Tr. Sommerstein 2008.

[46] The chorus asserts at *Ch.* 66–70: 'Blood, when it is drunk up by the nurturing earth, congeals as vengeful gore that cannot dissolve away: the guilty one is torn apart by unending calamity and sickness that lasts and lasts.' Tr. Sommerstein 2008.

[47] On the Erinyes as dirty and polluted, Padel 1992: 103–4.

[48] On this scene, Parker 1983: 370–1; Sommerstein 1989: 88–9; Hoessly 2001: 122–4. On ancient supplication, Naiden 2006, with 7 and 92 on the *Oresteia*.

[49] Parker 1983: 370–4.

Erinyes asleep. This very conversation represents a breach of the normal ritual procedure outlined above: Apollo, in his role as a purifier, and Orestes, in his role as the suppliant to be purified, should not speak.[50] Apollo explains that he will be Orestes' guardian, and that he is already helping by restraining the Erinyes in their slumbers (vv. 64–73). Apollo's control of the avenging goddesses is perhaps the reason why Orestes appears composed and not insane, as one would expect to encounter him after the final scene of the *Libation-bearers*. Apollo's help is only temporary, however: he explains that the Erinyes will pursue Orestes, and that the young man must wander until he reaches Athens where he will supplicate Athena and where his case will be put on trial (vv. 75–93). Apollo cannot dispel the Erinyes, and he warns Orestes that he should not allow his mind to succumb to fear (v. 88, *μέμνησο, μὴ φοβός σε νικάτω φρένας*).[51] The threat of madness will follow Orestes until the end of the play, looming over him until the outcome of the court proceedings,[52] and because of this he will have to perform two supplications: the present ritual in Delphi, in order to purify his hands of blood, and a later rite at Athens, in order to avert the danger of the Erinyes, and thus rid himself of mental pollution.

While we never get to see Orestes' purification at Delphi, we do hear about it repeatedly later in the tragedy.[53] Having reached Athens, Orestes invokes Athena (v. 235) and claims that he is a suppliant, 'but not for purification, nor one with unclean hands'.[54] He explains the condition of his miasma as follows (vv. 238–9):

> *ἀλλ' ἀμβλὺν ἤδη προστετριμμένον τε πρὸς*
> *ἄλλοισιν οἴκοις καὶ πορεύμασιν βροτῶν.*
>
> But it is worn off and dulled[55] in the houses of others and by journeying among men.

[50] Hoessly 2001: 123 remarks that Orestes speaks, even though he later testifies that he knew that the suppliant must remain silent.

[51] Terror was the first symptom of Orestes' madness in the *Libation-bearers*: at v. 1024 Orestes says: *φρένες δύσαρκτοι, πρὸς δὲ καρδίᾳ Φόβος*; at v. 1052 the chorus tells him to hold firm and not to succumb to fear: *ἴσχε, μὴ φοβοῦ*.

[52] In the ancient Greek world madness was perceived as a temporary, recurring phenomenon, and not as a chronic illness. Padel 1995: 36–7 and 215–18 discusses Orestes as a prime example of a person struck by repeated fits of madness.

[53] Orestes' assertions of his purity: vv. 235–43; 280–5; 445–52. Athena proclaims him to be pure: v. 474; Apollo proclaims that he personally purified Orestes: vv. 577–8.

[54] v. 237: *οὐ προστρόπαιον οὐδ' ἀφοίβαντον χέρα*. The act of the purification of his hands (*οὐδ' ἀφοίβαντον*) is here etymologically associated with Apollo's epiclesis, *Φοίβος*. *ἀφοίβαντος* is attested only in Aeschylus (cf. LSJ s.v.; a second attestation comes from Hesychius' gloss s.v., which explains the meaning of the term (*ἀ{να}κάθαρτον*), and notes that Aeschylus employed it in the (now lost) play *Neaniskoi*. Orestes apparently claims that his 'hands were not untouched by Apollo'.

[55] Sommerstein 1989: 125 notes that both *ἀμβλύν* and *προστετριμμένον* logically refer to the blood pollution, but that here they are grammatically associated with the person who bears the pollution.

This statement has been much discussed in scholarship, because it raises the question of how exactly Orestes was purified.[56] Several passages in the play provide similar retrospective accounts of Orestes' purifications. The next testimony of purification in this play is a preamble to Orestes' second invocation of Athena. He claims that the blood 'is asleep' (vv. 280–5):

> *βρίζει γὰρ αἷμα καὶ μαραίνεται χερός,*
> *μητροκτόνον μίασμα δ' ἔκπλυτον πέλει·*
> *ποταίνιον γὰρ ὂν πρὸς ἑστίαι θεοῦ*
> *Φοίβου καθαρμοῖς ἠλάθη χοιροκτόνοις.*
> *πολὺς δέ μοι γένοιτ' ἂν ἐξ ἀρχῆς λόγος,*
> *ὅσοις προσῆλθον ἀβλαβεῖ ξυνουσίᾳ.*

The blood is sleeping and dies away from my hand; the pollution of matricide is washed out.[57] When it was fresh, it was expelled with purifications of pig-sacrifice at the hearth of the god Phoibus [Apollo]. It would be a long tale to recount from the start with how many people I had contact without any harm.

Orestes' second invocation of Athena also shows that he considers himself to be completely cleansed (vv. 287–9):

> *καὶ νῦν ἀφ' ἁγνοῦ στόματος εὐφήμως καλῶ*
> *χώρας ἄνασσαν τῆσδ' Ἀθηναίαν ἐμοὶ*
> *μολεῖν ἀρωγόν.*

And now, from my ritually pure mouth I invoke with religiously correct speech the queen of this area, Athena, to appear to me as a helper.

[56] Taplin 1977: 381–4 argues that 'Aeschylus seems to be deliberately complicated and unclear on the matter of purification: Orestes is purified at Delphi, and yet also on his wanderings', and concludes that it was a combination of cleansing by Apollo and wandering that purified Orestes. Parker 1983: 386–8 asserts that the purification occurs in three stages: firstly, the physical rite performed by Apollo at Delphi; secondly, a period of exile, during which pollution is rubbed off by social intercourse and purified by time; finally, the trial before the Areopagus which frees Orestes from the Erinyes and permits his return to Argos. See also Sommerstein 1989: 124–5. Sidwell 1996: 53, who provides an overview of literature on the issue, advances the view that Apollo did purify Orestes within the play, 'or at least that the audience have been given some non-textual indication in the opening scene that Apollo had done it either before the play opens or between the Pythia's exit and the *ekkyklema* entrance of Orestes and Apollo'. Dyer 1969 discusses the historicity of Apollo's Delphic shrine as a place of purifications, and points out that the evidence for the performance of purificatory rituals at Delphi is scarce, but see Sommerstein 1989: 131–2 for a critique of this argument. Lloyd-Jones 1998: 285 asserts: [the Erinyes] 'are not appeased when Apollo has purified him with pig's blood: that ritual can prevent his pollution from being contagious, but it cannot wash away his guilt.' Hoessly 2001: 122–31 argues along the same lines as Lloyd-Jones: he adduces visual evidence (vase images) in support of the thesis that Apollo purified Orestes with pig's blood (p. 123). Gilbert 2003: 184–6 argues that it is evident that Orestes was purified in Delphi, and that the text implies that Apollo performed the purification with pig's blood.

[57] Sommerstein 1989: 131 comments that the meaning 'washed out' is more appropriate than 'capable of being washed out', because Orestes has to show that his pollution has been removed. He also notes that this claim is in conflict with the assumption that nothing can remove the taint of bloodshed.

By qualifying his mouth as *hagnon*, Orestes is quick to assert the absence of the miasma which had previously prevented him from addressing the gods, and which had kept him away from public spaces and rituals. Furthermore, he announces that his invocation and subsequent prayers are expressed εὐφήμως, 'with a religiously correct speech', and since the substance of his prayer is personal salvation rather than personal gain or harm to others, he can indeed qualify his words in this way. What Orestes is asking for is absolution from his present distresses (v. 298, ὅπως γένοιτο τῶνδ' ἐμοὶ λυτήριος). Rightly or wrongly, by this point in the play Orestes hopes that he has already achieved both physical purity and purity of speech, 'gereinigte Rede', in Susanne Gödde's words.[58]

We can conclude from these examples that Orestes considers himself to be purified. Why, then, is he still pursued by the Erinyes? The Erinyes are only concerned with pollution as a consequence of kin-killing and they claim that such miasma can *never* be removed: even after Orestes reaches Athens and declares that he is pure, the Erinyes can still track and find him, 'following the blood' (v. 247) that, as he and the Olympian gods had thought, was supposed to have been removed from his hands. The Erinyes explain that their anger (v. 314, μῆνις) is directed against those who 'conceal their murderous hands' (v. 317, χεῖρας φονίας). Once they catch up with Orestes, the Erinyes reassert that a mother's blood, once spilled, cannot be recovered, and that they will claim his blood in recompense as a punishment for matricide (vv. 261–8). Even in Hades, Orestes will suffer punishments as a just retribution (vv. 269–75).

The claims of the Erinyes seem plausible, and their very presence at Athens testifies to their ability to smell blood which they believe to be polluted. As the purification ritual was never staged, and as we argue, Orestes' initial supplication at Delphi was interrupted by speaking, we are left wondering who is right. This ambiguity surrounding Orestes' purification must have been intentional.[59] The uncertainty over his status is compounded when, instead of witnessing the purificatory rite, the audience is presented with a long and elaborate staging of another ritual—the curse that the Erinyes inflict

[58] Gödde 2011: 96 and 136–7. Gödde 2011: 137, who translates εὐφήμως as 'mit "reiner" Stimme', makes, in n. 124, the interesting observation that 'εὐ- spielt in diesem Kontext deutlich auf die vollzogene Reinigung an'. Even if Aeschylus does not state this overtly, the idea of 'religiously correct' speech as a product of a well-disposed or pure mind (φρένες) lies near at hand: this is evident when, in a rhetorical question addressed to the Erinyes, Athena asks (vv. 988–9) 'Are they minded to find the path of a good speech / tongue?' On this passage, see 'From Inner Pollution to Sound-Mindedness' in this chapter (p. 163). For Athena, at least, Orestes' asserted *euphemia* ought to be a product of his *phrenes*: cf. *Eu.* 988–9 ἆρα φρονοῦσιν γλώσσης ἀγαθῆς ὁδὸν εὑρίσκειν; with Sommerstein 1989 *ad loc.*; a very similar idea is expressed in *Supp.* 774–5, when Danaus speaks of his 'εὐγλώσσῳ φρενί'.

[59] Taplin 1977: 381–4.

upon Orestes (vv. 307–96), which, by its nature, is the very opposite of purification.[60]

The purpose of the Erinyes' curse ('the binding hymn': v. 306, *δέσμιος ὕμνος*) is to cause madness:[61] the punishment for matricide will be a lasting impurity of mind. Even if Orestes' hands have been purified of his mother's blood, his mind will still be afflicted with insanity. As we highlighted above, Apollo warns Orestes not to allow his mind to succumb to fear;[62] fear was the first symptom of Orestes' mental derangement in the *Libation-bearers*. When we saw Orestes in Delphi, the Erinyes, the embodiment and agents of this fear and derangement, were asleep. Now they are alert and set on destroying his mind because they perceive him as being *consecrated* (v. 304, *καθιερωμένος*) to them.[63] Twice repeated, the goal of the curse, which they sing while encircling, and thus symbolically binding, Orestes,[64] is the following (vv. 328–33 = 341–6):

> *ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ τεθυμένῳ*
> *τόδε μέλος, παρακοπά,*
> *παραφορά, φρενοδαλὴς* (330)
> *ὕμνος ἐξ Ἐρινύων*
> *δέσμιος φρενῶν, ἀφόρ-*
> *μιγκτος, αὐονὰ βροτοῖς.*[65]

> And over the sacrificial victim, this is the song: frenzy, mental derangement, the chant of the Erinyes that ruins the mind, that binds the mind, without the lyre, sucking men dry.

Their chant also makes it clear that they inflict this mental derangement as a manifestation of miasma (vv. 372–80):

> *μάλα γὰρ οὖν ἁλομένα* (372)
> *ἀνάκαθεν βαρυπετῆ*
> *καταφέρω ποδὸς ἀκμάν,*

[60] On curses and pollution, Parker 1983: 191–206. Curses were performed facing west, purifications facing east; the consequence of a curse is divine wrath (*agos*), and its results are similar to those of pollution.

[61] On the performative aspects of the binding hymn, Taplin 1977: 384–7; Faraone 1985; Henrichs 1994/5: 60–5; Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 236–7. Henrichs' remark is particularly important (1994/5: 64): 'As performers of the binding song they [the Erinyes] exemplify the kind of frenzy… which they threaten to inflict on Orestes.'

[62] *Eu.* 88.

[63] On Orestes as a sacrificial victim of the Erinyes, Gilbert 2003: 181–6.

[64] Taplin 1977: 386 argues in favour of a circular dance, followed by Henrichs 1994/5: 63.

[65] Here we follow the punctuation and reading of Sommerstein 2008; *παρακοπά* is clearly and explicitly associated with external, divine agency at this point, unlike in the case of Agamemnon. See 'Agamemnon's Polluted Mind as a Ritual Agent' in this chapter (pp. 136–40).

σφαλερὰ καὶ[66] ταν υδρόμοις (375)
κῶλα, δύσφορον ἄταν.
πίπτων δ᾽ οὐκ οἶδεν τόδ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἄφρονι λύμᾳ·
τοῖον ἐπὶ κνέφας ἀνδρὶ μύσος πεπόταται,
καὶ δνοφεράν τιν᾽ ἀχλὺν κατὰ δώματος
αὐδᾶται πολύστονος φάτις. (380)

For I give a great leap and then bring down my foot from above with a heavy crash, a leg to trip even a runner at full stretch and cause unendurable ruin. But when he falls, he does not know this, because of the ruin of his mind. Such is the dark cloud of pollution that hovers over the man, and a voice full of grieving speaks of murky mist over his house.[67]

The goddesses thus claim to inflict mental pollution as a penalty for kin-killing. Orestes is consecrated to them, which means that he is under their curse, he is ἐναγής (*enages*). The logic is entirely circular—pollution by blood and kin-murder raises the avenging Erinyes, who pursue the murderer even after the physical taint of blood is gone. The Erinyes reassert their rights over the murderer by performing binding magic, and by inflicting madness as a manifestation of pollution. Mental pollution is invisible but, according to the Erinyes, it is permanent. These savage and terrifying beings may be repugnant to both gods and men, but they do claim the authority of a divine law (vv. 391–2, θεσμὸς ἐκ θεῶν), and they claim that this law is their ancient privilege and their honour (v. 394).[68] Their case against Orestes seems equally as strong as Apollo's defence, and they cannot easily be brushed aside. Not even Apollo himself can chase them away from Orestes—the most he can do, as we have seen, is to keep them asleep in Delphi and hinder their pursuit, buying Orestes the time to reach Athens first and to supplicate Athena. It seems probable that the only reason why the Erinyes' binding hymn does not work on Orestes is that he is Athena's suppliant. What would happen to him if he left Athena's shrine? The threat of the Erinyes is real.[69]

This suggestion is reaffirmed by Athena's treatment of the goddesses. Whereas Apollo is rash, arrogant, and insulting towards them, Athena wishes to hear them out and promises to organize a trial for homicide, which will provide a chance for both parties to make their case.[70] It is interesting that Athena does this even though, having heard Orestes' firm claim that he

[66] Here we follow the text of Sommerstein 2008.

[67] Tr. Sommerstein 2008, lightly modified.

[68] The divine authority underpinning the Erinyes' activities is also alluded to in v. 208 with the verb προστεταγμένον ('ordained', 'commanded', or 'instructed by a decree'); Sommerstein 1989: 118 relates this verb to tasks assigned to them by Moira (vv. 334–5, 347–8), but it may also be understood more generally to denote the initial division of domains among the old gods.

[69] *Pace* Hoessly 2001: 127, who claims that the Erinyes are in the wrong because their hymn does not work.

[70] On Apollo and Athena's conflicting perception of the Erinyes, Padel 1992: 189–92.

is not polluted (vv. 445–52), she herself proclaims him to be 'a pure suppliant' and 'not harmful for her temple' (v. 474).

Miasma on Trial

Athena is anxious that the Erinyes will spill poison from their *minds*[71] and bring plague to the land. This anxiety is a reflex of the popular belief that a homicide pollutes the whole community until he is prosecuted.[72] Robert Parker has argued that the fear of pollution by association with a killer was stronger in a society without courts, where the avenging spirits of the victim were perceived as compelling the relatives to acts of revenge. The anger of the victim was perceived as pollution, a threat to a community, which attaches itself to a killer and has to be expelled or annihilated. Parker sees the idea of pollution developing almost as a rationalization of the practice of exiling the killer, whereby the removal of the homicide was explained as a response to the pollution; once the courts and homicide trials were established, pollution was transferred from the homicide to the jurors and the city that they represent.[73] Parker views the *Eumenides* as a dramatization of this rationalizing process.

This suggestion is attractive. The trial plays a pivotal role in resolving the grievous circle of suffering and murders presented in the trilogy. At the trial, the Erinyes cross-examine Orestes, who admits that he did kill his mother (v. 588) and that he had been instructed to do so by Apollo (v. 594); he states, furthermore, that he did it because his mother had carried a double pollution (v. 600) as the killer of her husband and his father. We witness, for the last time in this trilogy, a murderer claiming removal of miasma as his motive. Apollo defends Orestes by admitting that he, with Zeus' council, had urged Orestes to kill his mother in order to avenge the treacherous and undignified murder of Agamemnon (vv. 625–39). The Erinyes reply by pointing out that, because he has spilt his mother's blood, which is the same as his own, Orestes cannot return home and cannot perform religious rituals at Argos (vv. 652–6). By claiming this, the Erinyes are effectively stating that Orestes is still polluted and must be treated as such—that he is a danger to his home, to his city, and to any religious organization in it.[74]

Apollo's arguments at the trial have not been entirely convincing thus far (vv. 609–73),[75] and he has also lost his temper (v. 644). His final argument is the most difficult to assess, since, instead of claiming that Orestes is pure and purified, he offers a novel and rather whimsical explanation of

[71] v. 478: *χωρεῖ μεταῦθις ἰὸς ἐκ φρονημάτων*. [72] Parker 1983: 104–20.
[73] Parker 1983: 115–26. [74] Sommerstein 1989: 205.
[75] On these lines, see Sommerstein's remarks 1989: 197–211.

human reproduction: Apollo notoriously argues that Orestes did not spill blood that was the same as his own, since the mother is simply a nurse for the embryo, which is entirely begotten by the father (vv. 657–73).[76]

After these words, the votes are cast. The ensuing conversation between Apollo and the Erinyes demonstrates that their conflict regarding miasma and purification is far from resolved. The Erinyes claim that Apollo is involving himself with blood-stained activities, even though this is not his allotted task and that, dwelling in his sanctuary, he will be giving unclean responses (vv. 715–16). They threaten to ravage the Athenian land if Orestes is acquitted (vv. 719–20), but Apollo claims that their poison can do no harm (vv. 729–30).

Throughout the trial, the two views on pollution remain as entrenched as ever: the Erinyes are firm in claiming that pollution by kindred blood can never be effaced, whereas Apollo asserts that Orestes is pure, as he has been purified by a god. Since Apollo argues that Clytaemestra was not in fact Orestes' blood-kin, however, we are left wondering whether the god's novel theory of generation was the reason why it was possible to purify him in the first place. Would ancient audiences have accepted Apollo's argumentation? It is impossible to claim anything with certainty, but this seems highly unlikely. It is plausible, and very probable, that Orestes commanded more sympathy than the Erinyes, and that audiences wished to see him acquitted,[77] as it was almost certain that no one had much sympathy for Clytaemestra. The manner of Orestes' acquittal remains problematic, however, as does the unresolved matter of his purity. Was he or was he not polluted when the trial began? How are we to understand the Erinyes' persistent threats of madness? Their very presence on the stage, their chilling binding song, and their savage urge to drink Orestes' blood must have had a profound effect on the audience.[78] The belief that murder can drive the perpetrator insane is well attested in ancient Greek culture, and the Erinyes on stage could have been perceived as a constant and real threat to Orestes' sanity. Their view of miasma,[79] and the contrasting view of Apollo, create a problem which simply cannot be resolved, and one which is not satisfactorily resolved by the end of the play. To add to this difficulty, Orestes' own explanations of his purification

[76] The theory of generation which Apollo presents here is the same as that which Aristotle attributed to Anaxagoras (*GA* 763b31–3). See the discussion in Sommerstein 1989: 206–8, and Sidwell 1996: 47–8 and 50–1.

[77] Of course, we cannot claim to know what ancient audiences would have thought about Orestes. Orestes' motivation is generally perceived as just and selfless in modern scholarship—for a recent example of this view, see Helm 2004, 47–51. Garvie 1986: xxxi–xxxiv is a notable exception.

[78] Taplin 1977: 372 adduces the testimony from the *Life of Aeschylus* (9), according to which the audience was so terrified by the sight of the Erinyes in the play that children fainted and women miscarried.

[79] As we argue, this view is also advanced by other characters throughout the trilogy, including Orestes himself. See n. 45.

ritual also raise many questions—if he had been purified by the god at Delphi, why was he also 'purified by other people in their houses', as he claimed (v. 451–2)? Did he doubt the efficacy of Apollo's ritual? Why was it also important that he should rub off his miasma by associating with other humans in their houses and during his travels (vv. 284–5)?

All of these questions are justified, as the text is intentionally vague and inconclusive. One could argue that the aim of the play was to raise such questions. The pollution of the mind is the most complex and enigmatic type of miasma. Discerning whether or not a fellow citizen was polluted and polluting was challenging enough, but deciding whether their mind was contaminated must have been bewilderingly complex. How was one to know whether a fellow citizen was *enages*, in the grip of the gods, owing to some curse, broken oath, or other heinous crime? Seeing that even the gods can disagree on questions of purity and pollution must have been profoundly confusing and disconcerting.

From Inner Pollution to Sound-Mindedness: From Erinyes to *Semnai*

What seems certain at the end is that, once the votes have been counted and he is acquitted, Orestes is free to leave, and even the Erinyes no longer raise the matter of his pollution. Apollo and Orestes depart, but the Erinyes remain on the scene, enraged at the judges, and threatening to pollute the entire city (vv. 778–92). Whereas Apollo seemed to be immune to the Erinyes' threats of pollution, Athena displays a completely different attitude. She takes the threats more seriously than her brother, and she is genuinely concerned that the Erinyes might harm Athens. She goes to great lengths to prevent this. The Erinyes are mollified by Athena's promise to honour and uphold their rights if they consent to remain in the city and be benevolent towards the citizens. Athena is particularly worried about the effects of the Erinyes on society, and she asks them not to stir up civil discord and internecine violence (vv. 858–63), but to encourage external wars instead (vv. 864–5). They finally accept, and they transform from avengers of individuals into benefactors of the entire *polis*, overseeing all human affairs and ensuring that offenders are appropriately punished (vv. 903–1002). Finally, instead of cursing, the Erinyes bless the Athenians (vv. 957–67): they pray for the benefit of the people and for an end to blood-spilling through retaliatory murder (vv. 976–83), a desire which foregrounds their complete change of heart. The implication seems to be that once there is a judicial system in place there is no need for the Erinyes. They form a procession and leave the stage as *Semnai* ('august') goddesses, to take possession of their new shrine.

The end of the *Eumenides* thus becomes an enactment of the aetiological myth for the worship of the *Semnai Theai*, who had an ancient, venerable, and important cult at Athens. The location of their shrine in a cave underneath the Areopagus is indicative of its great social and religious significance.[80] In the realm of law, the *Semnai Theai* occupied a place of great prominence, being particularly closely connected to the Areopagus council: the council met on the days which were sacred to the *Semnai*; magistrates of the court and participants in trials at the council (prosecutors, defendants, and witnesses) took oaths in the name of these goddesses. The *Semnai* watched over the results of homicide trials held at the Areopagus, and acquitted defendants customarily made offerings to the goddesses.[81] When the assembly, the largest civic body of the Athenians, took vows to organize a public festival in case of success in a political affair, they sometimes vowed by the *Semnai*, because the goddesses were seen as guarantors of the legal system and protectors of the entire city.[82] The grand annual procession celebrating the *Semnai* was one of the most splendid of the year. In the fourth century, we hear that the cult was managed by the elite of the Athenian intellectual and political scene, while the procession's festive company was assembled from members of the most reputable families, marching in silence. The great procession at the end of the *Eumenides* is perhaps meant to resemble the annual festive procession in the cult of the *Semnai Theai*.[83]

Aeschylus represents the foundation of this cult as marking a new period in the history of Athenian society, a period in which the authority of civic institutions has encroached upon the traditional, vendetta-style means of dealing with killing. The transformation of the Erinyes into the *Semnai Theai* is indicative of the strengthening of judicial processes at Athens and, perhaps more generally, of success in political reforms which were geared towards

[80] Generally on the *Semnai* (a scholarly shorthand for the consistent ancient practice of referring to the goddesses as *Semnai Theai*) and their relation to Eumenides and the Erinyes: Henrichs 1994; Seaford 1994: 95–8; Parker 1996: 298–9; Johnston 1999: 267–73; Sommerstein 2008: xxi–xxiv. The location of their cave sanctuary is yet to be identified, but its proximity to the Areopagus is evident from Pausanias' report (1.28.5–6); Henrichs 1994: 39 locates it 'near a cleft in the rocks on the northeast side of the Areopagus, towards the depression that separates that hill from the Acropolis'.

[81] On the Areopagus' meetings held on days sacred to the *Semnai*: scholia to Aeschines 1.188 and Sommerstein 2008: xxii. For oaths taken in the name of these goddesses: Deinarchus 1.46–7, 87; for the *Semnai*: watching over trials: Parker 2005: 406. For offerings to the *Semnai*: by acquitted defendants: Paus. 1.28.6. On rituals and the connection between the *Semnai Theai* and the Areopagus: Henrichs 1994: 39–46 and Seaford 1994: 95–8.

[82] *IG* II^2 112.6–12, dated to 362/1 BC, concerning an alliance with Peloponnesian cities, and *IG* II^2 114.6–12, also of 362/1 BC, dispatch of a cleruchy to Potidaea; on these, Parker 2005: 406.

[83] On Demosthenes and Lycurgus as the *hieropoioi* of the cult, and on irreproachable participants: Parker 1996: 298 and Sommerstein 2008: xxii–xxiii. On the procession: Philo, *Quod omnis probus liber sit* 140, with Henrichs 1994: 39–46 and Parker 1996: 298–9.

ending the vicious circle of reciprocal violence.[84] The world inhabited by the Venerable Goddesses is a world in which conflicts and homicides are resolved through trials, and the *Semnai Theai* embody the authority of the judicial process, as opposed to the personifications of the horrors of reciprocal violence that are the Erinyes.

As two sides of the same coin, the Erinyes and the *Semnai Theai* both encapsulate the principal motivation to obtain what is just; where they differ is in the manner of obtaining justice, and Aeschylus' trilogy vividly depicts this change in their modus operandi. The justice of the Erinyes represents a narrow, personal concept, defined and governed through bonds of blood. They stress in the *Eumenides*, for example, that it is not their concern to pursue Clytaemestra for killing her husband, for that was not a kindred murder of a person of the same blood (v. 212). They also display a complete blindness to, and a lack of interest in, the motivation for the murder: they relentlessly pursue Orestes, yet in their conversation with Apollo they assert that the god is entirely responsible for Clytaemestra's murder (vv. 198–200). The Erinyes in Aeschylus' trilogy, as in Homer, also invariably defend the elder members of the family.[85] The trick that Athena pulls off is that, by promising and giving them appropriate honours as goddesses venerated by the entire community, together with a cult-place situated within the boundaries of the community, she obliges them to employ their powers for the greater social good and to stop pursuing justice for individuals. She offers them a shrine close to the Acropolis (v. 855), and from that moment on they are in charge of the entire society. Instead of spreading fear, they will embolden and unite the citizens, rendering them more capable of fighting external wars (vv. 864–5). The integration of the Erinyes into the *polis* cult at Athens is vividly enacted at the end of the play, when the priestess of Athena Polias, with her assistants and temple servants,[86] leads them off the stage in the procession which perhaps evokes the annual procession to the shrine of the *Semnai Theai*. The Erinyes entered Athens as a menace in pursuit of Orestes, cursing him and threatening to drive him mad with fear; they exit as orderly, institutionalized, and benevolent deities, singing a hymn and conferring blessings on the community.

For fifth-century audiences, the transformation of the Erinyes into the *Semnai* and the first trial at the Areopagus enact the introduction of judicial procedure, which is grounded in the assessment of the perpetrator's motivation and volition. What bearing, we must now ask, does this change have

[84] Pointed out by Seaford 1994: 96–7, who elaborates the issue of judicial authority represented in the *Eumenides*, and observes that the play (p. 97) 'express[es] the necessity of subordinating the Furies to the judicial process by imagining a past time in which the absence of an authoritative judicial process produces an apparently insoluble crisis'.

[85] In Homer, Iris admonishes Poseidon not to disobey his brother, by saying: 'You know that the Erinyes always follow the elder' (*Il.* 15.204). In the *Eumenides*, the goddesses defend Kronos, and view Zeus' binding of his father as an outrage (vv. 640–3).

[86] On the participants in the ritual procession, Sommerstein 1989: 276–8.

on the issue of mental purity and miasma? For fifth-century audiences, did Orestes' trial, with its outcome, also mark the point of change in the conception of pollution by homicide? Did the outcome of Orestes' trial demarcate the period when every homicide brought with it a relentless contagion from the period in which the intensity of pollution and its duration corresponded to the perpetrator's motivation? As judicial procedure developed at Athens between the seventh and the fifth centuries BC, punishment for homicide became measured. The available evidence suggests (but not more) that this was a change from the previous era, in which every homicide indiscriminately represented a chilling threat of pollution for an entire community.[87] By the fifth century BC, the punishment for a homicide, and, to a degree, the perception of the intensity of the pollution triggered by the deed, were brought into alignment with the motivation for the crime.[88] The sentence for a homicide was no longer an automatic execution, nor an automatic and permanent exclusion from the ritual life of the community, and the punishments did not presuppose that every perpetrator would be equally polluted. Once the issues of volition, intention, and motivation gain greater prominence—from Draco onwards—an assessment of the perpetrator's internal disposition plays a crucial role in the judicial procedure. In the Classical period, trials for intentional homicides are separated from those for unintentional homicides, those of the justified from the unjustified.[89] The levels of pollution through homicide are calibrated accordingly, and not every homicide carries with it pollution of the same type or intensity, nor the same kind of civic punishment.[90]

Athenians of the fifth century BC probably did believe that concerns about the internal disposition of the homicide and attempts to avoid pollution had

[87] Gagarin 1981: 110–44; Carawan 1998: 17, with relevant literature in n. 29.

[88] See Harris 2010: 126–37 on homicide and pollution in drama, and p. 133 for an analysis of different types of pollution from homicide. Harris 2010: 133 posits that 'there was not one type of pollution from homicide, but several levels, each one calibrated to express different levels of culpability'. We agree that there are different types of contagion ascribed to different types of homicide (none vs. temporary; curable vs. permanent and incurable; assumed vs. 'proven').

[89] On the issues of intentionality and Draco, with a discussion of authenticity, see Carawan 1998: 33–83 and Gagarin 2008: 93–6. The issue of justifiable vs. non-justifiable killing in Draco's code is bedevilled by issues of authenticity, but the categories of justifiable and non-justifiable killing are no doubt Classical: Carawan 1998: 92–6. Harris 2010: 132–3 provides a list of circumstances under which a defendant could claim to have committed a justifiable homicide.

[90] It has often been posited that Draco's laws reflect a fear of pollution and contagion: Parker 1983: 115 with n. 45, who challenges this view, provides an overview of hitherto proposed arguments. Parker 1983: 116 labels the pollution as a 'shadowy spiritual *Doppelgänger* of the law'. Extant homicide laws all but ignore pollution, an exception being Dem. 23.72, which states that a person exiled for involuntary homicide can return to his homeland upon completion of the exile only after he has also sacrificed and been purified. The *lex sacra* from Selinus (*SEG* XLIII 630 = *NGSL* 27, 5th cent. BC), which deals with the purification of the homicide, published a decade after Parker's seminal 1983 study, demonstrates no interest in motivation, whereas civic laws concerning homicide show little interest in issues of purification.

shaped their judicial practices and the structure of their court system.[91] The audience of the *Oresteia* in 458 BC knew of five different homicide courts, in five different locations, with special procedures in place to try five distinct types of killing:[92]

1. The Areopagus court tried the intentional homicide of Athenian citizens and, upon conviction, imposed the death penalty, confiscation of property, and a ban of burial in the Attic soil.[93]
2. The court at the Palladium dealt with unintentional homicide, or killing by 'planning' the actions and events that led to death, but without the intention of causing death,[94] and with killings of non-citizens. Upon conviction, the homicide was sent into exile—leaving Athens within a specified period and using a specified route[95]—until (or unless) pardoned by the relatives of the victim.
3. The Delphinium court, which was possibly established after Solon's reform of the Areopagus, tried perpetrators of homicide who pleaded that it was justifiable.[96] If convicted for an unjustifiable killing, the murderer was punished, so far as we can gather, as if the case had been decided before the Areopagus. If they were found innocent, that is, if their case for a justifiable killing was sustained in the proceedings, they were released. If the case was decided as a justified homicide, it appears that no pollution clung to the perpetrator.[97]
4. The ancient court set up 'in Phreatto' was designed to put on trial those who had committed or attempted homicide but who were already in exile owing to a previous conviction. Such defendants were not

[91] Parker 1983: 119–20 on the court 'in Phreatto', and the defendant banned from setting foot on land: 'Obviously these regulations can be interpreted as a device to protect the land from pollution, and this is no doubt how many Athenians understood them.' Carawan 1998: 18 concurs that the Athenians of the Classical period probably perceived the courts at Prytaneum and 'in Phreatto' as safeguards against miasma, but posits that the original purpose of these courts' organization was different. What matters to us is the perspective of Aeschylus' audience rather than the original reasons for the shaping of Athenian homicide law.

[92] Overviews in MacDowell 1963, but see the caveats concerning his treatment of pollution in Todd 1993: 292; Todd 1993: 271–6; Carawan 1998: 99–135; Leão 2010: 45–6.

[93] Todd 1993: 273–4; Carawan 1998: 108–15.

[94] In the debate on the meaning of *bouleusis* we follow Gagarin 1990 versus MacDowell 1963: 60–9, who advanced the view that 'planning' included intentional homicide as well. For an overview of discussions: Carawan 1998: 116.

[95] Dem. 23.72.

[96] Leão and Rhodes 2015: 31–2 Fr. 21/1, accept this as part of Draco's set-up, on the grounds that *IG* I^3 104.37–8 seems to show that at any rate one kind of lawful homicide was included in Draco's law.

[97] MacDowell 1963: 70–81, Todd 1993: 274, and Carawan 1998: 118–25. No pollution: Arnaoutoglou 1993: 118. Parker 1983: 124 argues that in the case of justified killing, or socio-politically sanctioned forms of homicide (tyrannicides), ritual purification was not considered to be necessary because such killings were perceived as restoring order in the community.

allowed to step on Attica's soil due to concerns for purity, and they were tried while on a boat moored off the shore.[98]

5. Finally, the court at the Prytaneum (together with the court 'in Phreatto', the two earliest courts) tried animals and inanimate objects which caused death, and organized trials for cases when the homicide remained unidentified. In cases of convictions, inanimate objects as well as animals would be cast out of Attika.[99]

Hence, for the mid-fifth-century audience of the *Oresteia* at Athens, the intensity of pollution by homicide was correlated to the intention and motivation of the perpetrator. An individual who committed intentional and unjustifiable homicide was considered to be permanently impure; pollution clings to such a person even after death. The perpetrator of an unintentional homicide was also perceived as being polluted, but this pollution was temporary and could be purified after a period in exile, and after subsequent sacrifice and ritual purification. Intentional but justifiable homicide, it seems, carried no pollution. Quite the opposite: the act itself was, in the discourse of the late fifth and fourth centuries, perceived as a form of purification. By the end of the fifth century, an individual who killed subverters of democracy was proclaimed to be ὅσιος καὶ εὐαγής ('ritually correct' and 'looked on kindly by the gods'). In Demosthenes, the treatment of the justified homicide is repeatedly associated with Draco's laws, and the justified killer is labelled as *katharos*; only unjustified killing is polluting, in the view of Plato's Euthyphro.[100]

To return to the questions we have raised with regard to Orestes' trial, it seems evident that for fifth-century Athenian audiences this event could have been perceived as the point of change in the conception of pollution by homicide. By juxtaposing their legislative system with the situation in Argos, Aeschylus invites his audiences to reflect on the resources they had at hand to resolve a situation that, for Orestes, is essentially irresolvable. After the murder of Agamemnon, Electra and Orestes had no court to indict Clytaemestra; the only way for them to avenge their father was to kill their mother or to have her killed. It is made obvious that Apollo was perceived as being completely responsible for the matricide and for Orestes' role in this, even in the eyes of the Erinyes. Orestes does not deny the deed—he admits that he killed his mother as requital for the murder of his father (v. 464), and that Apollo shares responsibility for the action (v. 465). Most significantly for the Athenian audiences, Orestes says to Athena (vv. 467–9):

[98] Dem. 23.77; Todd 1993: 274–5; Carawan 1998: 101–8.

[99] Todd 1993: 274–5; Carawan 1998: 99–101.

[100] Analysis and evidence in Parker 1983: 366–9; on subverters of democracy: Andoc. 1.96–8. Demosthenes on Draco's laws and justified killing: 23.53; 23.60.

> *σὺ δ' εἰ δικαίως εἴτε μὴ κρῖνον δίκην·*
> *πράξας γὰρ ἐν σοὶ πανταχῇ τάδ' αἰνέσω.*
>
> You be the judge of whether I did it with justice or not;
> in whatever way you treat me, I shall be content with the outcome.

In our view, Orestes invites Athena to investigate his case as a case of justified homicide.[101] At the trial, Orestes asks Apollo to be his witness and to explain whether he killed Clytaemestra with justice.[102] He adds: 'I do not deny the deed as it is, but judge this bloodshed, whether I appear in your mind to have done it justly or not, so that I may demonstrate to these people ["jurors"].'[103] Unequivocally and emphatically, Apollo confirms that it was done justly.[104]

In the fifth century Orestes would have been able to request that his case be heard not before the Areopagus but at the Delphinium, and, should the potential prosecutor have alleged unlawful killing, to have this request fulfilled.[105] He would have been able to make a very strong case for justifiable killing, as Demosthenes remarked (23.74): 'There is a third court . . . for those cases where a man confesses to the killing but claims to have acted lawfully:

[101] On the phrasing, Sommerstein 1989: 164–5; Sommerstein 2010: 29–30 remarks that Orestes does not, in fact, *state* that he is a justified killer, and he underlines that Orestes asks Athena to judge whether he acted justly or not (vv. 467–9). Similarly, for vv. 609–13, Sommerstein states (at p. 30) that Orestes '*asks Apollo to expound and judge* whether he had acted justly in killing [Clytaemestra]' (italics in original). Sommerstein argues that Orestes does not follow the correct procedure of a historical trial, because 'it would be necessary at more than one stage for the defendant not only to assert but swear to the truth of his claim to be innocent'. In our view, Orestes does not ask Apollo 'to expound and judge if', but rather 'to testify and explain if' (v. 609). Swearing an oath means binding oneself to a god, and Orestes does not need to swear an oath: he has an actual god present, and Apollo is defending him and claiming that the truth is that the killing was justified (vv. 615, 619–21). Furthermore, Apollo claims that everything he says is at the bidding of Zeus and that he was following the counsel of his father, concluding: 'An oath can in no way be stronger than Zeus' (v. 621). Sommerstein 1989: 200 interprets this statement as Apollo's request that the jurors disregard *their* oath; in our view, Apollo is refusing to swear an oath himself (as a witness was expected to do in a trial), because he speaks as Zeus' representative, which confers upon him the highest possible authority.

[102] vv. 609–10: *ἤδη σὺ μαρτύρησον, ἐξηγοῦ δέ μοι, / Ἄπολλον, εἴ σφε σὺν δίκῃ κατέκτανον.*

[103] vv. 611–13: *δρᾶσαι γάρ, ὥσπερ ἔστιν, οὐκ ἀρνούμεθα· / ἀλλ' εἰ δικαίως εἴτε μὴ τῇ σῇ φρενὶ / δοκεῖ, τόδ' αἷμα κρῖνον, ὡς τούτοις φράσω.*

[104] For once, Apollo speaks clearly and not obliquely (vv. 614–21): *λέξω πρὸς ὑμᾶς, τόνδ' Ἀθηναίας μέγαν / θεσμόν, δικαίως, μάντις ὢν δ' οὐ ψεύσομαι. / οὐπώποτ' εἶπον μαντικοῖσιν ἐν θρόνοις, / οὐκ ἀνδρός, οὐ γυναικός, οὐ πόλεως πέρι, / ὃ μὴ κελεύσαι Ζεὺς Ὀλυμπίων πατήρ. / τὸ μὲν δίκαιον τοῦθ' ὅσον σθένει μάθε. / βουλῇ πιφαύσκω δ' ὔμμ' ἐπισπέσθαι πατρός. / ὅρκος γὰρ οὔτι Ζηνὸς ἰσχύει πλέον.*

[105] For the procedure, see MacDowell 1963: 70–1.Unlike hearings before the Areopagus or at the Palladium, where the plaintiff decides at which court to raise the issue, in the case of the Delphinium it was on the defendant's suggestion that the *basileus*, who presides over this court, would admit a case. See Carawan 1998: 120. The point that Orestes' case would have been heard at the Delphinium was also recently made by Sommerstein 2010: 26, who, like Naiden 2010 and Leão 2010, discusses the legal dimension of Orestes' trial in Aeschylus.

this is the court at Delphinium. For those who originally defined these jurisdictions…considered that Orestes confessed to having killed his mother and was acquitted by a jury of gods, and they reckoned that there *is* some justifiable killing—for the gods would not have rendered an unjust verdict. They therefore defined by statute the circumstances in which it is lawful to kill.'[106]

As we have seen, if acquitted by the Delphinium court, the justified killer was perceived as being unpolluted. For fifth-century audiences, Orestes' case before the Areopagus is presented before the wrong court. These audiences would not only have been able to conclude that their legal system represented progress from vendetta-style retributive kin-killings to a more just and orderly manner of conflict-resolution, but, furthermore, by juxtaposing the case of Orestes as it would have been put on trial in the mid-fifth century to the first trial at the Areopagus court as represented in the tragedy, they would have been put in a position to reflect on the progressive development and increased sophistication of their judicial system. The judicial system, which went through a series of changes and adaptations, took increasing account of the motivation of the homicide and, as we have noted, the grades of pollution also came to reflect the motivation. It is the mind of the homicide that plays a crucial role in deciding which court should try their case and, again, it is the individual's mental disposition that determines the degree of their subsequent pollution.

This change in how homicide is perceived is, as Aeschylus represents it, twofold: it is an institutional change and a religious change. Institutional change is represented through the *aetion* of the Areopagus as the first Attic court—first in the dramatic imagination, that is, if not, perhaps, in fact.[107] On the one hand, by juxtaposing Argos, a society with no courts, to ancient Athens, where Athena establishes the Areopagus court, Aeschylus reflects on the benefits of having such a body. On the other hand, by juxtaposing the Areopagus trial of Orestes to the way in which he would have been prosecuted in contemporary Athens, the playwright spotlights the positive development and the sophistication of the existing judicial system.

Religious change is represented through the *aetion* of the cult of the *Semnai Theai* at Athens. The aetiological narrative embodies the rejection of punitive acts motivated by atavistic drives, and the ratification of judicial contemplation and of the authority of instruments of justice. Instead of acting out 'principles of absolute retaliation',[108] the Erinyes' transformation is completed through their gradual, but ultimately explicit and complete,

[106] Tr. Carawan 1998: 118.
[107] Carawan 1998: 99–101 on issues of the historicity of court foundations.
[108] Henrichs 1994: 46.

rejection of antisocial patterns of 'justice',[109] and the full reversal of their mental attitudes. Gone is the automatic retaliation which impersonated justice; gone are the minds that pollute and the practice of inflicting mental pollution in the forms of madness, derangement, and delirium.[110] Towards the end of the *Eumenides*, the Erinyes dispense prayers and blessings instead of curses and binding hymns (vv. 956–67, 976–87),[111] and they are praised as the *Semnai Theai* by Athena on account of the 'straight justice' that they guarantee, the soundness of their mind, and their *euphemia* (vv. 988–95):

ἆρα φρονοῦσιν γλώσσης ἀγαθῆς
ὁδὸν εὑρίσκειν;
ἐκ τῶν φοβερῶν τῶνδε προσώπων (990)
μέγα κέρδος ὁρῶ τοῖσδε πολίταις·
τάσδε γὰρ εὔφρονας εὔφρονες ἀεὶ
μέγα τιμῶντες καὶ γῆν καὶ πόλιν
ὀρθοδίκαιον
πρέψετε πάντως διάγοντες.

Is finding the path of good speech on their mind? From these scary faces, I see great yield (coming) for these citizens here. By always greatly honouring these sound-minded (goddesses), you, sound-minded citizens, will shine in every respect, and keep your land and the city on the straight path of justice.

The passage lays great emphasis on contemplation and sound-mindedness, a form of mental purity, concerning both the goddesses and the Athenian citizens. It is contemplation, a rationalizing assessment of internal disposition, that guarantees 'straight justice' in divine and human terms, and that facilitates a fair assessment of motivation in a case of homicide and a corres-

[109] See vv. 980–3 for the Erinyes' rejection of retaliatory murders. The shift, however, is in procedure rather than in levels of abstraction: Goldhill 1986 addresses the tensions and ambiguities in the use of the term *dike* ('punishment', 'trial', 'case', or 'justice'), and draws attention to shifts in the language employed by Athena and the Erinyes: 'The determination of Justice is an act of a legal discourse's definition. The trial constitutes a determination in language. That is the newly instituted legal power of language' (p. 29). The Erinyes' initial and unambiguous concept of *dike* as retaliation is first destabilized at the discursive level of the play and at the dialogical level of the characters who present or embody their own, equally unambiguous, concepts of *dike*; in the end, it is supplemented by the appropriation of *dike* in the *logos* of the courts. Goldhill 1986: 30, correctly in our view, stresses that 'manipulations and transgressions in and of language, that have made up the verbal exchanges of this play, challenge society's basis in the ordered exchange and agreed value in communication'. By the end of the play the notion of 'justice' needs additional qualifiers; the last time that the concept is explicitly mentioned on stage it is, notably, *ὀρθοδίκαιος πόλις / γῆ* rather than the slippery *δίκη* (*δικαίως* of v. 1025 clearly does not refer to the *concept* of 'justice'). On justice and revenge in tragedy, with relevant literature, Cairns 2005: 306–8.

[110] Cf. vv. 328–33 (= 341–6); 477–8.

[111] Cf. Easterling 1993: 17 ('incantation' in reference to *ἐφυμνῆσαι* in v. 902 and 'prayer' in reference to vv. 922 and 979).

pondingly fair judicial procedure. For citizens, sound-mindedness leads to piety (appropriate honouring of the goddesses) and straight justice.[112] The issue of purity of mind, as a tool both for gauging the perpetrator's deed and for bringing about justice, is given a central position: a sound mind is capable of *euphemia*, and of finding the straight path of justice. No wonder, then, that the later tradition appears to have labelled the play *Eumenides*, 'Those of Good Disposition', for Athena's qualifications are recognizable also in the tenor of the words uttered by the processional escort in the very last scene of the play (vv. 1033–5, 1040–3):

> *βᾶτε δόμῳ μεγάλαι φιλότιμοι* (1033)
> *Νυκτὸς παῖδες ἄπαιδες ὑπ' εὔφρονι πομπᾷ·*
> *εὐφαμεῖτε δέ, χωρῖται.*

> Go to your home, you great childless children of the Night who rejoice in honours, with our sound-minded procession. Speak words of good omen, people of this land.

After a second encouragement to speak words of good omen (v. 1039), the procession addresses the goddesses directly (vv. 1040–3):

> *ἵλαοι δὲ καὶ εὐθύφρονες γᾷ*
> *δεῦρ' ἴτε, σεμναὶ <θεαί>,*[113] *πυριδάπτῳ* (1041)
> *λαμπάδι τερπόμεναι καθ' ὁδόν·*
> *ὀλολύξατε νῦν ἐπὶ μολπαῖς.*

> Well disposed and with righteousness on your mind ('with straight thoughts') towards the land, come here, *Semnai* (*Theai*), rejoicing in a torchlit procession along the road. Now utter *ololyge* to our song!

The transformation of the Erinyes into *Semnai Theai* is marked by the change in their mental disposition towards the community at large, and by a shift in their perception of what is just. As they become members of a ritual community, divinities respectfully integrated into the densely inhabited religious landscape of Athens, their mental disposition is qualified by the adjectives *euphrones* and *euthyphrones*. By the end of the trilogy, both the goddesses and the citizens have obtained a well-disposed mind, fostered by mutual favourable exchange, and it is enhanced by the spirit of the community in which an awareness of connectedness and co-dependence provides the foundations for a thriving and just society: by 'greatly respecting'

[112] It is perhaps significant to add that, whereas the Erinyes had previously assaulted the mind of the murderer, dispelling his *phrenes* (*Ch.* 1024: *φρένες δύσαρκτοι*), they now, as *Semnai Theai*, act as promoters of sound-mindedness and unify the citizens.

[113] We follow Sommerstein's edition in v. 1041; see Sommerstein 1989: 284.

the *Semnai Theai* in worship (*μέγα τιμῶντες*), the citizens display their own sound-mindedness and encourage the sound-mindedness of the goddesses—namely, progress, fecundity, and justice—in return. Sound-mindedness, the correct mental attitude, is thus conceptualized as the connective tissue that binds the goddesses and the city into an everlasting organic unity, an idea most clearly expressed in verse 992 with, we would maintain, the essentially (if not grammatically) appositional use of adjectives in the phrase '*εὔφρονας εὔφρονες ἀεί*'. The goddesses' correct mental attitude towards the city and the correct mental attitude of the citizens towards the goddesses are predicated on one another, and they are absolute prerequisites for the thriving of both the human and divine communities. The outcome of such a mental disposition is prosperity, the rule of righteousness, and justice: the city 'stands out' (v. 995, *πρέψετε πάντως*) in all respects, and it is governed by 'straight justice' (vv. 993–4, *γῆν καὶ πόλιν ὀρθοδίκαιον*) once the goddesses have completed their transformation and have found the 'road of good speech' (vv. 988–9, *γλώσσης ἀγαθῆς ὁδὸν*), 'good disposition', and 'straight thoughts' (v. 1040, *ἴλαοι δὲ καὶ εὐθύφρονες*). The triumph of sound-mindedness leads to the triumph of institutionalized justice; reflection on one's motivation and internal disposition, a persistent contemplation of the motives of one's own actions, provides the path towards being *euphron*. In this sense, the procession scenes which close the *Oresteia* portray the communal triumph of sound-mindedness over the individualistic blight of mental impurity.

SUPPLIANTS, PERFORMED BETWEEN 470 AND 459 BC

Summary: In the *Suppliants*, Aeschylus focuses on the mental attitudes of the sons of Aegyptus in the context of rituals of marriage and supplication. The Aegyptids' *dianoia*, the mental disposition which compels them to stalk the daughters of Danaus, is qualified as hubristic, 'manic' (*mainolis*), and 'impious' (*asebes*). Their wrongful mental attitudes result in impious actions, incorrect rituals, and pollution: Danaus refers to the Aegyptids as 'polluting' and to their desired marriage to his daughters as a 'mental transgression', while the Danaids label the intended marriage as *enages*, 'subject to perilous consecration'. The pious behaviour and religiously correct thinking of Danaus and his daughters provides a positive foil against which to gauge the actions of the Aegyptids. Following the rules of supplication closely, and moving tactically within the established and accepted system of ritual communication, the Danaids' pious attitudes meet with that of Pelasgus, and good, pious thinking on both sides renders the ritual of supplication successful. This successful ritual communication between devout parties—parties endowed with the capacity to 'think well'—is jeopardized by the Aegyptids, who are disrespectful of the Greek gods and of the entire system of ritual communication: their mental processes, their *phrenes*, are set against what is ritually pure (*dysagnoi*); their thinking is set on

> destruction and deceit (*oulophrones*, *doliometis*); their thoughts are very haughty (*agan periphrones*). As a result of such a mindset, the Aegyptids attempt to violate the fundamental rituals of marriage, supplication, and guest-friendship.

The plot of Aeschylus' *Suppliants* concerns the arrival and supplication of Danaus and his fifty daughters, the Danaids, in Argos. The Danaids have fled Egypt in an attempt to avoid marriage to the sons of their father's brother, Aegyptus, and are seeking protection in the native city of Danaus' great-grandmother, Io. Their arrival transfers the quarrel between Aegyptus, who insists on the marriage, and Danaus, who rejects his proposal, from Egypt to Greece. The reason why the marriage proposal is rejected is not elaborated in the play. While the *Suppliants* never states so explicitly, the Danaids' wish to maintain their virginal status might have been motivated by an oracle predicting that one of their offspring would bring doom to their father.[114] The potential marriage rites are portrayed as impure, a 'subject to perilous consecration' (v. 123, *enagea telea*), even though the blood-relationship between the Danaids and the Aegyptids appears to be distant enough that it would not constitute incest.[115] Endogamy between cousins was not considered to be problematic in either Greek or Egyptian culture; on the contrary, such marriages are very well attested and were well respected.[116] Two alternative explanations for the conceptualization of the marriage as 'impure' may be put forward. The first explanation stems from the subjective perspective of the Danaids. Since the sisters are determined to maintain their virginity, they perceive *telos*, in the sense of 'marriage' and hence 'sex', as a violation of their will and as 'subject to perilous consecration'.[117] The second explanation arises from the objective level of ritual action, which the behaviour of the Aegyptids transgresses. As Nick Fisher observes, the aggressiveness of their pursuit of the Danaids and their insistence on marrying them even after their father, as their legal guardian (*kyrios*), has rejected the proposal violates the normal ritual pattern in which the father of the bride's consent is the absolute prerequisite for the conclusion of a traditional *gamos*.[118] The rituals

[114] Sommerstein 2008: 284–5, with further literature. On the date and the myth, Gödde 2000: 13–22, and Sandin 2005: 1–8.

[115] As observed by Fisher 1992: 262–3, who also provides an overview of older scholarship which propounded the view that the Danaids oppose an incestuous marriage. Parker 1983: 98 cautiously labels the potential marriage between the Danaids and the Aegyptids as 'perhaps incestuous'.

[116] On endogamy practiced in Athens, Thompson 1967; cf. Fisher 1992: 263; Seaford 1994: 210, with bibliography.

[117] *If* there was an oracle which stipulated that the Danaids should not marry, then the marriage is also contrary to the divine will. On the vexed issue of the oracle, Kyriakou 2011: 65–76, with bibliography.

[118] Fisher 1992: 264–5. Danaus' reasons for rejecting the marriage have been discussed by Seaford 2012: 151–7, who suggests that such a marriage would end in the endogamic isolation of the Danaids and potentially expose them to abuse.

of marriage and supplication, and the threats of hubris in general,[119] and of transgressive acts in the context of rituals in particular, form the focal points for the two central tensions in the play: that between the fugitives and their persecutors, and that between the supplicants and their *supplicandi*, the city of Argos and its king, Pelasgus. Both tensions are anchored in the characters' reflexions on ritual correctness and qualified in terms of physical and metaphysical purity and pollution.

The motif of pollution is introduced at the beginning of the play, when the Danaids explain their reasons for fleeing Egypt and stress that they have not become supplicants and exiles due to bloodshed. There was no vote by the *polis* to expel them as stained by homicide; they left of their own accord (v. 8, *αὐτογενῆ*) and due to their refusal to marry the Aegyptids (vv. 9–10):[120]

> *γάμον Αἰγύπτου παίδων ἀσεβῆ τ'*
> *ὀνοταζόμεναι <διάνοιαν[121]>.*
>
> Abominating the marriage to the sons of Aegyptus, and their impious (*asebes*) [disposition/thoughts].

Alongside pollution, another prevalent motif, that of hubris, is also announced in the opening section of the play. The sisters' fear of their aggressive and persistent persecutors, who have followed them across the sea and whose arrival at Argos is imminent, is vividly represented as the anticipation of a 'hubristic swarm[122] of a multitude of men, sons of Aegyptus' (vv. 29–30, *ἀρσενοπληθῆ δ' ἑσμὸν ὑβριστὴν Αἰγυπτογενῆ*). In the Danaids' view, the sons of Aegyptus are driven by their intention of 'mounting the marital bed in which they are unwanted and from which *themis* bans them, claiming for themselves what belongs to their uncle' (vv. 37–9). This characterization of the Aegyptids as hubristic recurs throughout the play.[123]

The Aegyptids' hubris stands in opposition to what is, from the Danaids' perspective, just, proper, and *themis*, and results from their deranged, maddened minds (vv. 104–11 Sommerstein):

[119] Fisher 1992: 263 observes that the *Suppliants* employs the term *hubris* ten times, which is significantly more than any other play by Aeschylus.

[120] Text after Sommerstein 2008.

[121] The conjecture <διάνοιαν> by Weil is probable, cf. v. 109 and our discussion. According to Friis Johansen and Whittle 1980: 2. 96, διάνοια in Aeschylus differs from *phren*/*phrenes*, as it indicates 'the orientation of the mind in a particular direction' and denotes 'disposition (towards a person)', 'purpose', or 'intent', while in Euripides it means 'thoughts' or 'state of mind'. Sommerstein translates 'thoughts'.

[122] ἑσμός is often used of bees and wasps, see LSJ, s.v.; in our view, this is the first allusion in the play to the goading of Io, which becomes more fully developed further on (cf. esp. vv. 556–64).

[123] The term is uttered by the Danaids nine times out of its ten uses in this play, and once by Pelasgus, Fisher 1992: 263.

ἰδέσθω δ' εἰς ὕβριν
βρότειον, οἷος νεάζει πυθμὴν (105)
δι' ἁμὸν γάμον τεθαλὼς
δυσπαραβούλοισι φρεσὶν
καὶ διάνοιαν μαινόλιν
wκέντρον ἔχων ἄφυκτον, †ἄ- (110)
τᾳ δ' ἀπάτᾳ † μεταγνούς.

Let him [Zeus] see this human hubris, how the stem is sprouting on account of the prospect of[124] the marriage with us, having blossomed with thoughts hard to dissuade, and having maddened thought as an unerring sting, it has transformed its mind in delusion [and] infatuation.

Picking up on the metaphor of a swarm from verse 30 (ἑσμός), the 'unerring sting'[125] of verse 110 assimilates the intensity of the brothers' misguided determination, and of their stalking of Danaus' daughters, to their 'maddened thought'. Aeschylus focuses on their inner disposition when he states that hubris arises from *phrenes* and employs a *hapax legomenon*, 'hard to dissuade', to characterize their minds.[126] The adjective μαινόλις (v. 109) is another seldom-attested word,[127] and it is through this grouping of two rare terms, both applied by the Danaids to the Aegyptids' unreasonable and wrongful thoughts (*phrenes*, *dianoia*), that Aeschylus directs his audience's attention to the role of mental activity in hubristic behaviour. The playwright employs a similar technique in the *Oresteia*. As critics have observed, his portrayal of the Aegyptids' manic thinking, and of the ruinous transformation of their minds (*metagnosis*) which results in their religious transgression (*hubris*), recalls his portrait of Agamemnon's sacrilegious determination to sacrifice Iphigenia.[128]

Bad intentions foster wrongful ritual actions; impious minds perform unholy, religiously incorrect rituals. The gods register such instances and perceive them as transgressions, rather than as sources of joy. This idea appears to come to a head in verses 123–4, as we announced above:

θεοῖς δ' ἐνάγεα τέλεα πελομένων καλῶς
ἐπίδρομ'

Even if things are going well, the impure (*enages*) rituals (*telea*) are offensive to the gods.[129]

[124] Following Friis Johansen and Whittle 1980: 2. 95 on δι' ἁμὸν γάμον.

[125] A reference to the goading of Io, as suggested by Friis Johansen and Whittle 1980: 2. 96 *ad loc*., and with sexual connotations, Fisher 1992: 265. On pains inflicted by a hurtful sting (κέντρον), cf. vv. 563–4.

[126] Cf. LSJ, s.v.; δυσπαράβουλος may be the playwright's neologism.

[127] On both adjectives, Friis Johansen and Whittle 1980: 2. 96–7.

[128] See Sommerstein 2008: 302–3 with n. 21. On Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia, see 'Agamemnon's Polluted Mind as a Ritual Agent' in this chapter (pp. 133–40).

[129] There has been considerable discussion about the precise meaning of these lines; Sommerstein 2008 translates: 'But unclean rites, even when things are going well, are vulnerable to

The term the Danaids employ for the rituals they describe as 'impure' here is *telea*, a word which, as Alan Sommerstein points out, often denotes 'specifically… marriage or its consummation'.[130] In the context of their address to Zeus and the city of Argos, and preceded by an explicit reference to *gamos* in line 106, it is evident that the Danaids are alluding to nuptial rites in particular, and that it is these they are labelling as *enages*. This idea is reiterated in the following section, when Danaus compares the behaviour of the Aegyptids to polluting hawks (v. 225, *μιαινόντων γένος*[131]) harassing the Danaids, who are assimilated to doves (vv. 226–31):

> *ὄρνιθος ὄρνις πῶς ἂν ἁγνεύοι φαγών;*
> *πῶς δ' ἂν γαμῶν ἄκουσαν ἄκοντος πάρα*
> *ἁγνὸς γένοιτ' ἄν; οὐδὲ μὴ 'ν Ἅιδου θανὼν*
> *φύγῃ ματαίων αἰτίας, πράξας τάδε.*
> *κἀκεῖ δικάζει τἀμπλακήμαθ', ὡς λόγος,* (230)
> *Ζεὺς ἄλλος ἐν καμοῦσιν ὑστάτας δίκας.*
>
> How could a bird be pure (*hagneuei*), having eaten of another bird? How could a groom be pure (*hagnos*), marrying an unwilling woman from an unwilling father-in-law? Not even dead and in Hades would he, who has done such a thing, escape the punishment for the irreverence (*mataia*). For there, too, as they say, another Zeus judges these transgressions among the dead.

The hubris of the Aegyptids manifests itself in their pursuit of a *gamos* with the Danaids, which would not only be *enages*, as the Danaids state, but would also lead to miasma, the opposite of *hagneia*, and effect post-mortem punishments by the gods. Such a *gamos*, which the Danaids later recognize as being *dysphron* (v. 394: 'senseless'; 'of bad mental disposition'), would also constitute an *amplakema*, a 'transgression of the self'[132]—the very opposite of *themis*. The circle is thus complete: bad thinking results in bad ritual actions, and bad ritual actions incur a lasting metaphysical pollution.

Conversely, the Danaids' model attitude provides a standard against which to measure the behaviour and assess the religious transgressions of the Aegyptids. It is their appropriate mental investment in ritual actions

divine intervention', and we agree that this is the general sense of the passage. The difficulties stem from the term *ἐπίδρομ*', which can be taken to connote 'an attack' *against* the gods, or alternatively, something that can be 'overrun' *by* the gods. In either case, it is an action which is displeasing to the divinities. For an overview of textual problems, including syntactical issues and problems of interpretation, Friis Johansen and Whittle 1980: 2. 109–12; we find their suggestion that *telea* refers to the Danaids' 'dirges' in vv. 112–16 highly unlikely, however (vv. 112–16 is a supplicants' prayer stressing the gravity of their perilous situation; see Naiden 2006: 84–6).

[130] Sommerstein 2008: 304–5.

[131] The use of the substantive *γένος* in the simile is remarkable, as it encompasses the meanings of 'kin', relating to the Aegyptids, and 'species', relating to the hawks.

[132] *amplakema*/*amplakia* is regularly associated with an error of mind and pollution in early poetry. See Ch. 4 on Empedocles' use of the term *amplakia*, esp. n. 31.

which qualifies Danaus and his daughters as religiously correct in their supplication, and which defines their relationship to Pelasgus as supplicants and *supplicandus*.[133] Immediately following the long opening section by the chorus of the Danaids (vv. 1–175), Danaus instructs his daughters in the correct performance of the ritual and in the rules of supplication, preparing the ground for the appearance of Pelasgus.[134] In a sharp contrast to the motif of the maddened and impious minds of the Aegyptids which permeated the Danaids' choral song, Danaus' first words draw attention to good thinking (vv. 176–7): 'Children, you need to be mindful (*phronein*). With a mindful (*phronounti*) and loyal old man, your father, as your shipmaster, you arrived here.' Noticing the arrival of men in the distance, Danaus, who is clearly knowledgeable about the rules of supplication,[135] instructs his daughters to sit at the altar of the 'Assembled Gods', to hold the suppliant-branches in their left hands, and to answer any questions that the approaching men might have in a respectful way, while stressing that they have not been exiled due to bloodshed (vv. 188–96). The first line of the Danaids' response directly mirrors that of their father's speech (v. 204): 'Mindfully (*phronountos*), father, have you spoken to the mindful ones (*pros phronountas*).'[136] The sisters then begin a set of prayers to Zeus (v. 209), Helios (v. 213), Apollo (vv. 214–15), Poseidon (v. 219), Hermes (v. 221), and all the gods (vv. 223–4), underscoring their inner determination to perform the ritual in a correct manner.[137]

The correct inner disposition resulting in close adherence to ritual actions vouches for ritual efficacy. Upon his arrival, Pelasgus immediately recognizes that the ritual the Danaids are performing is in accordance with Greek custom, even though their looks and clothes mark them out as foreigners (vv. 234–45). After the Danaids make their case to the king in a stichomythic exchange (vv. 246–339) and reveal their Argive ancestry, Pelasgus promptly asks them what he can do in order to act piously towards them (v. 340, *eusebes*). Once they have uttered their request that he should not hand them over to the Aegyptids (v. 341), the king faces a dilemma: should he start a war, or risk a religious transgression? By refusing to hand over the Danaids, he and

[133] Throughout the play, Pelasgus reflects on the nature of his own acts. In this assessment he is guided by notions of justice and piety, and he emphasizes the importance of correct thinking with respect both to other men and to the gods. Zeitlin 1996: 135–6 points out that Pelasgus is constantly labelled as *eusebes*, *aidoios*, *euphron*, and *eumenes*.

[134] Taplin 1977: 198 labels the section starting with v. 176 'a very long entrance announcement for Pelasgus'.

[135] Cf. vv. 188–203.

[136] As observed by Friis Johansen and Whittle 1980: 2. 159–60.

[137] The Danaids are aware of the importance of *euphemia* in interaction with the gods, cf. vv. 693–7, where they explicitly mention a *euphemos Mousa* and make reference to the ritually pure mouths of the performers of a hymn (*hagnon ek stomaton*). On a 'pure mouth' in the context of dramatic rendering of the ritual supplication, Gödde 2000: 94–111 (her interpretation of the Danaids as impure *Mischwesen*, however, we find fundamentally questionable).

the city will enter into conflict with the Aegyptids; by rejecting their pious supplication, he risks inflicting pollution upon the community (v. 375, *agos*).

Torn between these two outcomes—personified as Deris ('Battle') and Alastor ('Revenge')—Pelasgus' contemplation (vv. 407–17) begins and ends by emphasizing the 'thought of deliverance.'[138] The Danaids respond by explaining what, in their view, constitutes such a thought, and what the only outcome of the king's deliberations should be if he is to remain pious (vv. 418–22):

> φρόντισον καὶ γενοῦ
> πανδίκως εὐσεβὴς πρόξενος·
> τὰν φυγάδα μὴ προδῷς,
> τὰν ἔκαθεν ἐκβολαῖς
> δυσθέοις ὀρομέναν.

Think, and become the most justly pious *proxenos*, do not betray the fugitive, made to leave from far away by ungodly expulsion.

When the Danaids' repeated insistence on their pious and proper ritual conduct fails to soften the king,[139] they reach for the ultimate legitimate weapon in the supplicants' arsenal and threaten to commit suicide on the sacred ground.[140] The prospect of a pollution of such vast proportions[141] overcomes Pelasgus' defences, and he agrees to support their case before his people (vv. 468–89).[142] The king's speech to the Argives accordingly concentrates on religious issues and highlights the consequences of any potential disregard of the suppliants' status; acknowledging the power of the Zeus Hikesios ('Of Suppliants', vv. 615–17), but decisively motivated by the fear of potential miasma,[143] the Argives unanimously grant Danaus and his daughters rights of free residence as foreigners (*metoecs*), rights of asylum, and inviolability (vv. 609–12).

[138] 'A deep thought of deliverance is needed' (v. 407, δεῖ τοι βαθείας φροντίδος σωτηρίου); 'Does it not appear that a thought of deliverance is needed?' (v. 417, μῶν οὐ δοκεῖ δεῖν φροντίδος σωτηρίου;).

[139] The Danaids' first argument concerns their status as suppliants: they request that they should not be dragged away from the altar (vv. 423–5, 429–32), and that Pelasgus should recognize the hubris of the Aegyptids (vv. 426–7), keeping in mind the long-term consequences of his decision for his descendants and for his house (vv. 435–7).

[140] Parker 1983: 185.

[141] v. 473, μίασμα… οὐχ ὑπερτοξεύσιμον, lit.: 'miasma that cannot be overshot'.

[142] Naiden 2006: 84–6 argues that the Danaids do not succeed because of their threat, and states that their threat was unimpressive. We find this interpretation difficult, in view of the fact that the Argive people unanimously resolved to grant the Danaids' request before they were formally called to vote, because of their fear of miasma: vv. 618–20.

[143] Decisively motivated: vv. 621–2; double miasma: v. 619. Sommerstein 2008: 371 suggests that since the Danaids are perceived as *astoxenoi*, citizen-foreigners, due to their ancestral links to Argos, wronging them would be an offence against *xenoi* on the one hand, and against their own citizens on the other.

The communication through ritual is, however, possible only by parties fluent in ritual norms and willingly adhering to ritual rules. The success of the Danaids' supplication and the sanctity of their suppliant status are immediately challenged by the arrival of the Aegyptids, portrayed as fundamentally lackadaisical towards the established norms of Greek religion. At this point all of the Danaids' accusations of hubris, as well as their related anxieties, appear to be well founded. The anticipated attack of the Aegyptids is based on a justified assumption of their hubristic conduct, which takes the form of ritual transgression—namely, violation of the Danaids' sanctity as suppliants, which will result in a polluting act of sacrilege. [144]

The following passage encapsulates the Danaids' disquiet about their reliance on norms of ritual communication and on the power of ritual to protect them against perpetrators violating Greek rituals and Greek gods (vv. 748–59 text: Sommerstein):

DANAIDS:
μόνην δὲ μὴ πρόλειπε, λίσσομαι, πάτερ·
γυνὴ μονωθεῖσ᾽ οὐδέν· οὐκ ἔνεστ᾽ Ἄρης.
οὐλόφρονες δὲ καὶ δολιομήτιδες (750)
δυσάγνοις φρεσίν, κόρακες ὥστε, βω-
μῶν ἀλέγοντες οὐδέν.

DANAUS:
καλῶς ἂν ἡμῖν ξυμφέροι τάδ᾽, ὦ τέκνα,
εἰ σοί τε καὶ θεοῖσιν ἐχθαιροίατο.

DANAIDS:
οὐ μὴ τριαίνας τάσδε καὶ θεῶν σέβη (755)
δείσαντες ἡμῶν χεῖρ᾽ ἀπόσχωνται, πάτερ.
περίφρονες δ᾽ ἄγαν, ἀνιέρῳ μένει
μεμαργωμένοι, κυνοθρασεῖς, θεῶν
οὐδὲν ἐπαΐοντες.

DANAIDS:
Do not leave me alone, father, I beg you! A woman alone is nothing, there is no Ares in her. They have murderous minds (*oulophrones*), treacherous intentions in their impure minds, they do not care at all for the altars, like ravens.

DANAUS:
We would profit indeed, children, if they were hateful to you and gods alike!

DANAIDS:
They will not keep their hands from us, father, in fear of this trident[145] and the holiness (*sebas*) of the gods. They are terribly haughty, enraged with unholy spirit, shameless dogs, paying no heed to gods!

[144] Parker 1983: 146 observes, in respect to *Supp*. 375, that any act of violence towards suppliants constitutes a transgression which brings about pollution.

[145] The idea is that the Aegyptids, seeing a symbol of Poseidon, mentioned already in v. 218, will not fear the sea-god since they have just successfully crossed the sea, as Fisher 1992: 269

Just as in the case of the marriage discussed above, the sacrilegious acts anticipated by the Danaids in verses 748–59 result from the Aegyptids' religiously incorrect mental disposition, to which the sisters refer no less than four times: their *phrenes* are set on destruction (*oulophrones*); their mental activities (*metis*) are set on deceit (*dolion*); their *phrenes* are contrary to what is ritually pure (*dysagnoi*), and are very haughty (*agan periphrones*). As in the earlier prayer to Zeus (vv. 104–11), Aeschylus again uses conspicuous language to draw his audience's attention to mental activity in the context of ritual: *oulophron*, in this form, is a *hapax*, as is *doliometis*, a word which may also be an Aeschylean coinage. *Dysagnos* is attested very seldom, and in a much later sources.[146] The word is employed here as an alternative to the more common *anagnos*. The point is that the prefix *dys-* clearly denotes incorrectness, while the prefix *an-* can also denote merely the absence of a quality. *Periphron* is a similarly rare term and one which, in marked contrast to its two uses in Aeschylus, where it labels negative traits, occurs in predominantly positive contexts in earlier literature.[147]

Previous instances of impurity of mind we have discussed were regularly associated with wrong mental disposition towards a ritual. In the *Suppliants*, however, the Aegyptids disregard the supplication ritual altogether, and this is the reason why they are characterized as having *dysagnoi phrenes*. They are compared to ravens (v. 751) because, like wild creatures, they demonstrate a complete lack of regard for the ritual. Furthermore, by pointing out that the Aegyptids are impure of mind and that they have no respect for *any* altar (vv. 751–2, *βωμῶν ἀλέγοντες οὐδέν*), the Danaids shift their perspective from the particular ritual of supplication to rituals in general. This generalizing move is then further elaborated in verse 755, where the Aegyptids are represented as ignoring the *sebas* of the gods, and verse 757, where their spirit is characterized as 'unholy'; and finally, the thought is brought to conclusion in verses 758–9, where the Aegyptids are compared to the proverbial shameless animal, the dog, and described as 'paying no heed to gods'. This characterization is again verified by the subsequent actions and words of the Aegyptids. When the Egyptian herald arrives, he

points out. The Danaids themselves thanked Poseidon for their successful journey, and they now assume that the Aegyptids will have no reason to fear the god who granted them a good journey as well.

[146] Luc. *Alex*. 54, and Clem. Alex. *Protrep*. 12.119.1.8.

[147] On *oulophron*, a 'convincing and generally accepted correction of the impossible *δουλόφρονες*' (which would again be a *hapax*), Friis Johansen and Whittle 1980: 2. 104–5, who interpret *oulophron* as a metrical alternative for the epic *ὀλοόφρων*. On *doliometis* and *dysagnos*, ibid. with LSJ, s.v. On *periphron*, ibid. 108. In *Ag*. 1426 the chorus labels Clytaemestra's words as *periphrones*, resulting from her manic *phren*. In our view, the phrase *agan periphrones* is strikingly similar in content to the concept of arrogance towards the gods as expressed in the phrase *mega phronein*, on which see 'Hippolytus' *mega phronein*' in Ch. 10 (pp. 185–90).

explicitly announces the Aegyptids' intention of seizing the Danaids and dragging them from the sanctuary against their will (vv. 883–4). Furthermore, in the course of his exchange with the sisters, he arrogantly violates the rules of *xenia* (vv. 917–26[148]), and openly declares his disrespect for the Greek gods (vv. 893–4). The Aegyptids' irreverence is so all-pervasive and all-encompassing that the Danaids qualify their temper as similar not to anything human but to *κνώδαλα*, wild beasts, that are *anosioi*, religiously incorrect (vv. 762–3). As we have seen, Aeschylus repeatedly employs animal similes to characterize the Aegyptids: they are hawks, ravens, wolves, serpents, dogs, and spiders, relentlessly pursuing the Danaids, who are correspondingly figured as doves and heifers. This imagery presents the Aegyptids, as Froma Zeitlin points out, not only as predatory animals, but specifically as animals whose behavioural traits mark them out as outside of the social norms of ritual communication:[149] they eat their own kind; they desecrate altars; they represent a terrifying threat; they are shameless and impulsive creatures. It is due to the incorrectness of their minds, minds which disregard and undermine absolutely vital societal rituals such as marriage, *xenia*, and supplication, that they are represented as being other than human—as feral creatures, less, even, than domestic animals.

By concentrating on the rituals of marriage, supplication, and guest-friendship, Aeschylus' *Suppliants* foregrounds the issue of purity and religiously correct thinking in ritual communication between human parties. Aeschylus employs striking language to highlight the mental attitudes of those involved in such rituals, challenging his audiences to carefully consider both the positive example of ritual communication between the Danaids and their *supplicandus*, and the negative example of the Aegyptids and their disregard for the ritual. The motifs of correct and incorrect mental attitudes in the moment of, or towards, ritual action thus serve as an invitation to reflect on the fragility of the rules of ritual communication: adherence to these rules, which results from contemplation and conscious effort, upholds and guarantees the stability of a society in moments of crisis; incorrect inner attitudes towards such rules are portrayed as antisocial, impious, and generators of miasma.

[148] Cf. the related arrogance towards the host at vv. 911–15 as perceived by Pelasgus.
[149] For discussion of this imagery, Zeitlin 1996: 127–8.

9

Sophocles' *Sophrosyne*, Unsound Thinking, and Pollution

Summary: Sophocles' extant plays do not reference inner purity and pollution explicitly; however, they frequently reflect on the merits of religiously correct thinking and represent the devastating perils of incorrect thinking about the gods. We provide an overview of passages where the leader's unsound thinking results in a communal pollution: In *Antigone*, Creon's mind is identified as a source of disease, a communal miasma affecting the entire city (v. 1015); in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, we encounter a hymn to purity of words and deeds (vv. 863–72) as a foil for Oedipus' fatal and polluting thinking and behaviour. In *Ajax*, it is Ajax' 'thinking of thoughts inappropriate for mortals' (v. 777) that results in blasphemy which is instantly punished by a divinely sent delusion. In essence, the Sophoclean gods 'love those who think safely, and hate the bad (kakoi)', as Athena declares in *Ajax* (vv. 132–3). Purity and piety in general are strongly intellectualized in Sophocles, and are rooted in theological contemplation.

Sophocles' plays demonstrate an interest in ritual which appears to be less extensive than that evidenced in the work of Aeschylus or Euripides. Allusions to ritual, however, elements of ritual perversion, and the conflation of diverse elements of rituals for the sake of plot development are all attested in Sophocles and have attracted some attention among critics;[1] *Antigone*, however, is the only one of his extant tragedies in which ritual forms the focal point of the plot. Rather than concentrating on individual rites, Sophocles tends to deliberate on the consequences of a ruler's actions for a community's relationship with the gods. In his *Antigone* and *Oedipus Tyrannus*, he represents pollution as a communal disaster which befalls the city as a consequence of the ruler's decisions and actions. The playwright also displays a keen interest in the mind as the source of piety and impiety, and in the words and actions which result from thinking inappropriately about the gods. In *Ajax*, the hero's blasphemy is identified as a symptom of his unsound thinking; in

[1] The fullest overview of scholarship on Sophocles and ritual is Rehm 2012, with further literature.

Antigone and *Oedipus Tyrannus*, it is inappropriate thinking on the part of leaders which generates communal miasma. In this chapter, therefore, rather than focusing on complete plays and on the role of the inner (im)purity in the context of ritual action, we highlight select scenes from Sophocles' corpus which contain resonances of the discourse on piety and impiety as predicated on the mental attitudes of the worshippers.

We start with a remarkable absence of pollution. Whereas both Aeschylus and Euripides reflect on the complexities of miasma by focusing on Orestes' matricide in several plays, Sophocles' *Electra* (produced in the 410s BC) makes no mention of any pollution which befalls Orestes after Clytaemestra's murder. Furthermore, the matricide is described as a just deed (vv. 35–7) and as a purification of Orestes' ancestral home (vv. 69–70). Clytaemestra and Aegisthus are represented as polluting elements in the community (vv. 275–6), and the fact that they continue to live and rule in Argos is presented as an infringement of *sophronein* and *eusebein* (vv. 307–8; 1383).[2] After the murder, Orestes announces: 'If Apollo prophesized well, everything is well in the house' (vv. 1424–5). Rather than engaging with the complex problem of pollution as a consequence of matricide, Sophocles focuses on the problem of criminal and impious rulers who must be eliminated so that piety and 'safe-thinking' can ensue.

In Sophocles' *Ajax* (probably produced in the early 440s BC[3]), the eponymous hero's tragic downfall is caused by his blasphemous words, which are explicitly described as being 'without sense' and boastful. Calchas disclosed to the Greeks that when Ajax' father told him to fight with the help of the gods, Ajax replied (vv. 766–77):[4]

> *ὁ δ' ὑψικόμπως κἀφρόνως ἠμείψατο,*
> *'πάτερ, θεοῖς μὲν κἂν ὁ μηδὲν ὢν ὁμοῦ*
> *κράτος κατακτήσαιτ'· ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ δίχα*
> *κείνων πέποιθα τοῦτ' ἐπισπάσειν κλέος.'*
> *τοσόνδ' ἐκόμπει μῦθον. εἶτα δεύτερον* (770)
> *δίας Ἀθάνας, ἡνίκ' ὀτρύνουσά νιν*
> *ηὐδᾶτ' ἐπ' ἐχθροῖς χεῖρα φοινίαν τρέπειν,*
> *τότ' ἀντιφωνεῖ δεινὸν ἄρρητόν τ' ἔπος·*
> *'ἄνασσα, τοῖς ἄλλοισιν Ἀργείων πέλας*
> *ἴστω, καθ' ἡμᾶς δ' οὔποτ' ἐνρήξει μάχη.'* (775)
> *τοιοῖσδέ τοι λόγοισιν ἀστεργῆ θεᾶς*
> *ἐκτήσατ' ὀργήν, οὐ κατ' ἄνθρωπον φρονῶν.*

He replied boastfully and without sense: 'Father, with divine assistance, even a man who is worth nothing would be victorious. I, however, am convinced that

[2] On *sophrosyne* in Sophocles, Rademaker 2005: 123–42.
[3] On the date, Finglass 2011: 1–11.
[4] We quote the text of Sophocles after Lloyd-Jones and Wilson 1990.

> I can achieve such glory even without them.' Such a boast he uttered. Then, for the second time, regarding divine Athena when she urged him on and told him to turn his deadly hand against the enemies, he answered with these horrible and unspeakable words: 'Mistress, you should stand close to the other Argives; where I stand the battle line will never be breached!' With such words he brought on himself the implacable wrath of the goddess, since he was thinking thoughts inappropriate for mortals.

It is significant that Calchas not only condemns Ajax' hubristic utterances, but lays a special emphasis on the mind which produced them. It is Ajax' thinking (*phronein*) that is the ultimate cause of his downfall. The seer Calchas also pointed out that the gods pile heavy misfortunes on 'anyone who has a human nature and yet does not think (*phronein*) thoughts appropriate for humans' (vv. 760–1):

> *ὅστις ἀνθρώπου φύσιν*
> *βλαστὼν ἔπειτα μὴ κατ' ἄνθρωπον φρονῇ.*

Since Ajax has impious thoughts, he utters impious words, and is appropriately punished with a complete derangement of the mind. The chorus identifies Ajax' madness as a god-sent sickness (*θεία νόσος*),[5] and deliberates over which of the gods sent it; the audience, however, receives the answer at the very beginning of the play, when Athena assumes responsibility for the hero's condition and explains that 'arrogant words against the gods' are the cause of destruction (vv. 127–8). She announces that it is 'safe-thinking' which the gods love, and that 'badness' results in divine hatred (vv. 132–3):

> *τοὺς δὲ σώφρονας*
> *θεοὶ φιλοῦσι καὶ στυγοῦσι τοὺς κακούς.*

Throughout the play Ajax is unfaltering in his view, and even declares that he no longer owes any service to the gods (vv. 589–90); finally, tormented by shame, he kills himself.

Another character whose flawed thinking about the gods, paired with a religiously incorrect attitude towards the rituals, lies at the core of his impiety is Creon in *Antigone* (produced in the 440s BC). Creon's decision to prohibit Polyneices' burial and to sentence Antigone to death for her attempts to bury her brother is labelled as impious and as the result of bad thinking and planning. Both decisions carry great weight with regard to miasma: Polyneices' unburied body is a source of pollution, but Creon refuses to acknowledge this, going as far as claiming that he does not care 'even if Zeus' eagles feed on the corpse and bring of it to the throne of Zeus' (vv. 1040–1).

[5] vv. 172–85, 278–80, 611.

Even more astonishingly, Creon asserts (vv. 1043–4): 'I know well that it is not in the power of mortals to pollute the gods.' However, in the case of Antigone he anxiously attempts to prevent miasma by sentencing her to die of starvation rather than killing her (vv. 773–6).[6] These two acts are condemned by Teiresias, who predicts divine punishment as a retribution for Creon's transgressions (vv. 1064–71).

The chorus of Theban elders explicitly contemplates on the notion of wrongful thinking and its fatal consequences for the relationship of humans with the gods. Following Creon's decision to imprison Antigone and let her starve to death (vv. 577–81), the chorus recalls the destiny of the doomed Labdacid family,[7] and singles out the mindlessness of their words, an 'Erinys of the thoughts', and arrogance as the causes of its downfall (vv. 603–5):

> *λόγου τ' ἄνοια καὶ φρενῶν Ἐρινύς.*
> *τεάν, Ζεῦ, δύνασιν τίς ἀν-*
> *δρῶν ὑπερβασία κατάσχοι;*
>
> …foolishness of words, Erinys of the thoughts. Zeus, which human arrogance could rein in your power?

Creon's own inappropriate mental attitude towards both the gods and justice is repeatedly stressed in the play.[8] In one striking stichomythy, Haemon points out that his father is offending against justice (v. 743) as well as against the gods (v. 745). Creon retorts with insults rather than with counter-arguments, accusing his son of having a bad character, of displaying insolence, and of 'emptiness of thought' (vv. 754–5):

> CREON:
> *κλαίων φρενώσεις, ὧν φρενῶν αὐτὸς κενός.*
>
> HAEMON:
> *εἰ μὴ πατὴρ ἦσθ', εἶπον ἄν σ' οὐκ εὖ φρονεῖν.*
>
> CREON:
> You yourself, being empty of thoughts will regret your attempt to influence my thoughts.
>
> HAEMON:
> If you were not my father, I would have said that you do not think well.

[6] Creon is concerned about avoiding divine *agos*, which would target him as a killer of a family member, and about avoiding miasma for the entire city, which he would presumably spread as an untried homicide.

[7] On ancestral fault in *Antigone*, see Gagné 2013: 362–76; on this passage, 371–6.

[8] Mikalson 1991: 179 highlights passages in which Teiresias time and again attempts to incite Creon to think, to learn, and to plan (vv. 1023, 1031–2, 1048–52).

The exchange between father and son revolves around a subtle etymological play focused on the notions of 'teaching' (*phrenoun*) and 'thinking' (*phronein*). Creon's threat that Haemon will regret his attempt to lecture him—which we translate above as 'attempt to influence . . . thoughts' in order to highlight the etymological nuance of the exchange—is countered by an explicit comment on Creon's bad *phronein*.

Creon's bad decisions bring doom not just to him, but to the entire city. Teiresias reports that the gods no longer listen to human prayers, that sacrifices fail, and that the observation of entrails and bird-omens is impossible, as birds and dogs have defiled the altars and braziers, feasting on the corpse of Polyneices (vv. 1005–24).[9] The manifold failure of rituals and the inability to establish communication with the gods due to the all-encompassing miasma are repercussions of Creon's fatal decision to prohibit the burial. According to Teiresias, it is Creon's mind that is a 'cause of disease for the entire city' (v. 1015):

καὶ ταῦτα τῆς σῆς ἐκ φρενὸς νοσεῖ πόλις.

The disease in question is miasma. One man's wrongful actions resulting from his faulty *phrenes* trigger a chain reaction which has fatal consequences for ritual communication in the entire *polis*; in this context, his position as the leader of the community is crucial, as his thoughts and actions towards the gods thus bear more weight. Sophocles represents a man who is entirely wrong, and for whom it takes the ultimate punishment—the loss of his immediate family members—for him to learn from his mistakes.

At the end of the play, 'good thinking' is represented as the source and guarantee of happiness and of a good relationship with the gods (vv. 1348–53):

πολλῷ τὸ φρονεῖν εὐδαιμονίας
πρῶτον ὑπάρχει· χρὴ δὲ τά γ' ἐς θεοὺς
μηδὲν ἀσεπτεῖν· μεγάλοι δὲ λόγοι (1350)
μεγάλας πληγὰς τῶν ὑπεραύχων
ἀποτείσαντες
γήρᾳ τὸ φρονεῖν ἐδίδαξαν.

Thinking is by far the first prerequisite for having the gods on your side (*eudaimonia*). One must not be impious towards the gods in any respect. Big statements are punished by big blows, and instruct one to think in old age.

Eudaimonia—a term which denotes the state of 'having a good daemon', 'enjoying divine protection', and hence 'happiness'—is predicated on one's correct thinking. The fundamental basis of piety, the chorus asserts, is to

[9] See Parker 1983: 33 and 47–8.

have good thoughts: the statement that one should 'in no respect' be impious towards the gods elaborates this point further—it is not just one's actions towards divinities that matter, but also the way in which one thinks about them, as this too has direct repercussions both for individuals, and, as we saw in Creon's case, for the community at large. Thinking inappropriately about the gods, by contrast, is punished by harsh penalties which serve a didactic purpose—one either 'thinks well' about the gods or one is taught to 'think well' through suffering.

The complex pollution of an entire city as a result of its leader's religious transgression is also the central topic of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* (produced in the 420s BC). When a disastrous complex pollution (*λοιμός*) befalls the city of Thebes,[10] the Delphic oracle announces that there is miasma which must be expelled from the land (vv. 95–8), and that the means of purification (*katharmos*) is the banishment or execution of Laius' killer (vv. 99–107). During the course of the play, Oedipus gradually comes to the conclusion that he himself is this religiously incorrect diffuser of miasma (v. 353, *ἀνόσιος μιάστωρ*). One of the many paradoxes in this tragedy is that Oedipus stayed away from the couple in Corinth whom he believed to be his parents so that he might avoid pollution (vv. 1012–13), because the oracle had announced that he would kill his father and marry his mother. This is precisely what he did, unwittingly, in Thebes, and he now realizes that he is a *κακός* and *ἄναγνος* (vv. 822–3), that the gods hate him (vv. 1345–6), and that the gods have demonstrated that he is *ἄναγνος* and *ἀσεβής* (vv. 1382–4). Oedipus exudes pollution, and willingly leaves the city.

The purity of words and deeds is exulted in a choral song performed by the Theban elders. This passage represents *hagneia* as a divine law which humans must follow (vv. 863–72):

εἴ μοι ξυνείη φέροντι μοῖρα τὰν
εὔσεπτον ἁγνείαν λόγων
ἔργων τε πάντων, ὧν νόμοι πρόκεινται (865)
ὑψίποδες, οὐρανίᾳ 'ν
αἰθέρι τεκνωθέντες, ὧν Ὄλυμπος
πατὴρ μόνος, οὐδέ νιν
θνατὰ φύσις ἀνέρων
ἔτικτεν, οὐδὲ μήποτε λά- (870)
θα κατακοιμάσῃ·
μέγας ἐν τούτοις θεός, οὐδὲ γηράσκει.

Let destiny be my assistant in achieving reverent purity of all words and deeds, which the lofty laws sanction, begotten in the Olympian aether, whose father is

[10] On *loimos* as a whole complex of disasters, including fatal disease, failure of crops, and death in childbirth, see Parker 1983: 257–8.

> Olympus alone. The mortal nature of men did not give birth to them, and they will never fall asleep, forgotten. Great is the god in them, who does not grow old.

This is a striking and unique assertion of the divine origin and authority of the purity regulations. The regulations are explicitly labelled as laws (*nomoi*), and the passage underscores the universal and timeless validity of their divine authority, as well as the fact that the divine laws cannot be subject to human adaptation or intervention. This passage from Sophocles' tragedy chimes very well with the reality of Greek sacred regulations concerning purity. Historical purity regulations which outline the conditions under which a visitor to a sanctuary can enter a temple or participate in a ritual occupy a special place in the corpus of sacred regulations.[11] Unlike the sacred regulations dealing with other topics, purity regulations almost never ground their authority in the civic institutions of a *polis*.[12] Instead, they regularly rely, implicitly or explicitly, on divine authority.[13]

In the context of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the chorus' assertion is particularly notable. The Theban elders, who aspire to achieve purity in all words and deeds, are nevertheless victims of pollution due to the miasma of their leader. Oedipus' incestuous acts are perceived as impure, as are his words: regardless of the extent to which Oedipus is guilty of killing his father,[14] in the course of the play the eponymous hero makes a plethora of fatal utterances. First and foremost, he inadvertently curses himself by announcing the customary proclamation against the killer of Laius (vv. 236–43);[15] then he verbally abuses Teiresias (vv. 330–403, 429–44), and accuses Creon and Teiresias of conspiring against him (vv. 380–9 and 532–47). The chorus may also be referring to Iocaste's expression of doubt in the truth of oracles (vv. 848–58). Finally, it is remarkable that 'reverent purity' (v. 864, εὔσεπτος ἁγνεία) seems to be a permanent state here, since the chorus refers to 'all words and deeds'. The leaders are impure in words and deeds, and through this they endanger the whole community.

In this play, incest is perceived as a religious transgression and Oedipus is identified as being thoroughly impious and hated by the gods. It is interesting that, at the end of the tragedy, the chorus asserts that Oedipus is wretched

[11] For a catalogue and discussion of purity regulations as a group, Parker 1983: 37 with n. 3, 352–6 and Petrovic and Petrovic 2016. See also Parker 2004: 63–4, Lupu 2009: 14–18 and 77–9.

[12] Parker 2004: 63–4 notes that there is one exception to this rule: the purity regulation from Cos (*LSCG* 154, edited by Sokolowski with a number of extravagant decisions in sections IIa–b), which specifies that the exegetes proposed it to the assembly; however, the content of the Coan inscription is qualified as 'ancestral laws' (a6). The only other purity regulation that mentions the source of its authority is the Cyrenaean purity regulation (*LSS* 115)—the originator of this set of rules is the oracle of Apollo.

[13] Petrovic and Petrovic 2006.

[14] For an overview of scholarly opinions on this matter, Lefèvre 2001: 135–8 and Harris 2010.

[15] On the proclamation, see Parker 1983: 125.

in his mind as well as in his fortune (vv. 1347–8). In his case, it is not only his fate which renders him impious; just as in the other situations we have observed in Sophoclean drama, it is also the content of Oedipus' mind, his wrongful mental attitude, which affects his religious status.

Instead of engaging with ritual perspectives such as we have seen in Aeschylus, in all of his extant plays Sophocles displays a distinct intellectualizing stance towards issues of pollution and purity. With the relative exception of the *Antigone*, in which Creon's disregard of ritual miasma is one of the driving forces of the plot, in all other plays Sophocles' discourse on purity and pollution is closely intertwined with general theological concerns and reflections on the human capacity to form opinions about divine matters. In this respect, Sophocles seems to transpose the notion of ritual purity as a 'science of division'[16] into the sphere of intellectual discourses on the theological foundations of relationship between humans and gods. For Sophocles, the human quest for *sophrosyne* through contemplation on what is just and the acquisition of knowledge of what is theologically acceptable should result in an understanding of appropriate objects of human thought, and this is the Sophoclean basis of *eudaimonia*. And this seems to be the outer limit of what humans can achieve; *hagneia* remains an object of hope and prayer, firmly anchored in the divine realm. To have considerations inappropriate for humans, on the other hand, effects no metaphysical pollution, no brewing *agos* in the world of Sophocles' plays, but rather has direct and immediate repercussions for the individual and society at large, which, in return, serves as an emphatic invitation to rationality.

[16] See 'History of Scholarship' in the Introduction chapter (pp. 16–25).

10

Euripides on the Extremes of Purity and Pollution

Hippolytus, Orestes, Electra, *and the* Bacchae

Euripides' attitudes towards popular religion have attracted a great deal of scholarly attention. The views of Euripides as the champion of the 'fifth-century enlightenment' and as a critically minded intellectual with a subversive religious agenda, as well as the ancient and modern conceptions of Euripides the atheist,[1] once widely spread, no longer remain unchallenged. Since the latter part of the twentieth century, critics have repeatedly scrutinized and tested these assumptions. This process has entailed an assessment of the roles played by ritual, irony, and staging in articulating the theological considerations of Euripides' characters. The result of such investigations consists, to some extent, in a breaking of the hermeneutic moulds which cast Euripides' theology as consistent across his entire oeuvre; in its most radical formulation, the result is the rejection of such moulds as being uniformly employed even in a single play. Instead, scholars repeatedly stress the need to focus on religious instances and phenomena on a case-by-case basis, by assessing and exploring them both in- and outside of the distinct tragic world-view propounded by Euripides. In this sense, our discussion of inner purity and pollution in his plays both looks at the internal working of religious concepts in the context of the plays, and assesses these phenomena against the grid of external evidence, following the principle of the control of one genre by the evidence of others.[2]

[1] Cf. Ar. *Th*. 450–1.

[2] See Foley 1985: 17–64 for an overview of methodological approaches to ritual in Euripides, with an emphasis on sacrifice; Versnel 1990: 96–100 on approaches to the analysis of the *Bacchae*; Schlesier 1986: 35–50 for an overview of the development of the notion of Euripides as an 'atheist'; Yunis 1988 on Euripides' appropriations and adaptations of contemporary religion. Lefkowitz 1989 propounds the view that when Euripides' characters do appear to challenge traditional religious concepts by expressing 'philosophical' or even atheistic traits in their thinking about the gods, they do so out of desperation, and that in the end, for better or worse, they are convinced of the existence of divine powers. Similarly, Mikalson 1991: 7 and

HIPPOLYTUS, PERFORMED 428 BC

Summary: Hippolytus, the son of Theseus and an Amazon, is an *ephebe*, a follower and companion of the chaste, virginal goddess Artemis. He champions a broad, morally based concept of purity, and attempts to achieve and maintain an exceptionally pure way of life, shunning all sources of pollution, including sex. This exceptional purity enables him to associate regularly with Artemis and to hear her voice. He refuses to perform the rituals for Aphrodite and dishonours the goddess, who inflicts madness upon his stepmother, Phaedra, in the form of an erotic infatuation with her stepson. Phaedra describes her illicit passion as a 'miasma of the mind' (v. 317). A series of recklessly performed rituals brings Hippolytus down: Phaedra's nurse abuses the ritual of supplication and elicits a confession from her mistress, before coercing Hippolytus into swearing an oath that he will keep Phaedra's secret; the renounced Phaedra kills herself and accuses Hippolytus of rape in a letter which, when found by Theseus, results in the father cursing his own son. Poseidon, as Theseus' father, is compelled to execute the curse; Hippolytus is accused of having a villainous mind and of religious charlatanry, hypocrisy, and sexual crimes, and he is promptly exiled and mortally wounded. Artemis appears onstage to demonstrate Hippolytus' just, noble, and good mind (vv. 1298–9, 1390, 1419) and to accuse Theseus of moral badness because he has abused a curse (vv. 1286–9, 1318–24). At the end of the play, Hippolytus' purity of mind becomes evident to Theseus, and the son purifies the father of the miasma he had brought upon his mind by cursing him (vv. 1448–50). Theseus, who had formerly accused his son of having evil *phrenes* and of being a source of pollution, now praises Hippolytus' *phrenes* as being pious and good (v. 1454).

The tragedy focuses on Hippolytus' exceptional purity, which is threatened by Phaedra's miasma of the mind, by the Nurse's and Theseus' abuse of rituals, and finally by a divine *agos* as a consequence of Theseus' curse. Hippolytus' inner purity and moral blamelessness is finally revealed to all by Artemis. Hippolytus must die, but he becomes a local god in Trozen. The tragedy repeatedly stresses the role of the mind in the performance of ritual actions.

The *Hippolytus* concerns one character's attempt to maintain a lifelong pursuit of purity of body, mind, and soul, which leads him to a perilous end. Theological reflections on moral values—in particular, *sophrosyne*, *eusebeia*,

esp. 225–36 deconstructs ancient and modern views premised on such assumptions and assembles a picture of Euripides as a supporter of the fundamental beliefs and practices of Athenian popular religion. Lloyd-Jones 1998: 291–5 also stresses Euripides' adherence to traditional religion and vehemently protests against, in his words, 'neo-Verrallian rubbish' in interpreting Euripides' religious views.

Kovacs 1987 is a significant contribution to the understanding of the role of religion and, more particularly, of the gods as characters in Euripides' plays: he argues that Euripides' representation of the gods and religion is not ironic or subversive, but rather is in keeping with that of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Herodotus, and Pindar. For a summary of his views, Kovacs 1987: 71–7. Similarly, Allan 2008: 61–8.

and morally grasped *hagneia*—form the core of the tragedy, which questions and challenges these values by presenting different characters' perspectives on them.[3] Dialectic opposites of purity and impurity, *eusebeia* and *dyssebeia*, and mind and body frame the play. Central to the action are two similarly opposed deities, Aphrodite and Artemis, with the latter hating the former (vv. 1301–2) and the former inflicting pain on the latter (vv. 1339–40, 1396). Aphrodite appears at the beginning of the play, raising charges against Hippolytus; Artemis appears at the end to prove his innocence. The virginal, chaste (*hagne*) Artemis[4]—the patroness of wild nature, the hunt, and virginity—displays a remarkable closeness to a male human character, Hippolytus. Aphrodite, who in this tragedy represents the generative powers, uses a female human character, Phaedra—who is described as being 'of good repute' (v. 46), and who has even built a shrine for Aphrodite (vv. 29–47)—as a weapon in order to punish Hippolytus for neglecting her.[5] These two central human characters are equally opposed in their perceptions of life, in their religious attitudes, and in their social standing. Phaedra is Theseus' legitimate wife and the mother of his children; societal pressures define her behaviour, and she places great emphasis on her good standing and reputation.[6] Hippolytus is Theseus' son born out of wedlock and by an Amazon, the ultimate 'other' in the eyes of the Athenians.[7] Furthermore, Hippolytus was brought up away from Athens, in Trozen, by the 'chaste' Pittheus, his great-grandfather (v. 11). His remarkable way of life is defined by religious concerns far more stringent, and far more exclusive, than those of popular piety. Aphrodite uses her power in an attempt to force Phaedra and Hippolytus together, triggering a series of pollutions which ends with their violent deaths.

Hippolytus' *mega phronein*

The architecture of Euripides' plots is founded on his characters' reflections on both ethical and religious issues. In fact, Euripides repeatedly stresses the importance and the agency of *phronein* ('to think') and of *phren/phrenes*

[3] It has been long noted that Euripides explores the ambiguous quality of moral terms and the shifts in their meanings in *Hippolytus*. On *semnos* and *sophron* in this play, Segal 1970: 278; on *semnos*, Goff 1990: 85–6; on *sophrosyne*, Goldhill 1986: 132–4; Gill 1990; Rademaker 2005: 50–4; on *aidos*, Cairns 1993: 314–40.

[4] On Artemis *Hagne*, Burkert 1985: 150.

[5] Zeitlin 1985: 106–11 remarks that in Greek myth the gods usually directly punish mortals who deny them respect with excessive and destructive demonstrations of their power; she stresses that nowhere else in Greek myth does Aphrodite punish a mortal who refuses to honour her by inflicting erotic passion on someone else, the innocent human.

[6] Halleran 1995: 43–5.

[7] On the Amazons and discourse on 'the other' in scholarship, Blok 1995: 63–126; on the Amazons as 'the other' in ancient Greek culture, Blok 1995: 126–43.

('mind,' 'thoughts').[8] His usage of the substantive is remarkably broad: *phren/phrenes* can connote feelings or thoughts and a seat of deep emotion, but the term is also frequently employed to denote a general psychological agent to which moral blame and praise can be extended, to imply a sense of persistent moral or behavioural character. The mind in Euripides is a ritual agent, a seat of morality, and the part of the self that can be pure or polluted.

In the *Hippolytus*, *phren* is used three times to demarcate the contrast between mind and body (vv. 188, 317, 612),[9] and it is 'thinking big' (*mega phronein*) that appears as the reason why Aphrodite, and, by implication, the other gods, punish mortals in the first place. The play opens with Aphrodite's soliloquy (vv. 1–57) concerning the nature of the insult she has suffered from Hippolytus and the reason for her intervention in the human sphere. Having introduced herself as a mighty and universally revered deity, Aphrodite states (vv. 5–8):

> *τοὺς μὲν σέβοντας τἀμὰ πρεσβεύω κράτη,*
> *σφάλλω δ' ὅσοι <u>φρονοῦσιν</u> εἰς ἡμᾶς <u>μέγα</u>.*
> *ἔνεστι γὰρ δὴ κἀν θεῶν γένει τόδε·*
> *τιμώμενοι χαίρουσιν ἀνθρώπων ὕπο.*[10]
>
> Those who honour my power, I put first
> but I bring down[11] all those who have *haughty thoughts* towards me;
> for the following is also the case among the divine race:
> when they receive honours from humans, they rejoice.

The key words of this passage are *mega phronein*, literally 'to think big', which we translate above as to 'have haughty thoughts'. Aphrodite's words clearly conceptualize 'thinking big' as a transgression and as a reason for her to 'bring down' Hippolytus. The goddess has a whole catalogue of charges against the eponymous hero, objecting in particular to what he says, does, and whom he worships,[12] but his *thinking* is the first, and the most significant, transgression.

[8] Euripides uses the plural form *phrenes* sixty-two times and the singular *phren* forty-two 42 times. For an analysis of the meanings of the word in Euripides' plays, Claus 1981: 54–6; Sullivan 2000: 10–44. Mikalson 1991: 179–83 analyses *phren* as an organ of human rationality and as a seat of religious behaviour in tragedy, and identifies 'incorrect thinking' as the source of characters' impiety: 'In tragedy, *hybris* often emerges from discussions of impiety, lack of *sophrosyne*, and injustice.'

[9] We discuss these instances later in this chapter. The word similarly connotes the distinction between the mind and the body in two instances in Euripides' other plays (*El.* 387 and *Or.* 1604). See on this Claus 1981: 54–5, and, on *Or.* 1604 our discussion in 'Orestes' (pp. 216–28).

[10] We quote the text of the play after Diggle 1984.

[11] On the various occurrences of *σφάλλειν*, 'to trip, throw, cast down', in this play, Knox 1979: 224–6.

[12] vv. 10–20.

In the *Hippolytus*, thinking performs a key function as the agent of piety or hubris and as the source of respectful or disrespectful attitudes towards the gods.[13]

In order to punish Hippolytus for his *mega phronein*, Aphrodite usurps the *phren* of another human character, Phaedra, by inflicting on it erotic infatuation in the form of madness. Phaedra describes this madness as miasma of her *phrenes* (v. 317). This miasma will set in motion events which will ultimately lead to Hippolytus' death and Theseus' mental pollution. *Phronein* (along with *phren*) thus emerges as the driving force of the plot: the verb itself encapsulates and mirrors the shifting conceptions of the characters' moral and religious dispositions. What Aphrodite here defines as Hippolytus' transgression of 'thinking big' is precisely what Hippolytus perceives as having a 'sound mind'—being *sophron* and in possession of *sophrosyne*.

In addition to *mega phronein*, the charges which Aphrodite brings against Hippolytus are blasphemy and unacceptable social behaviour (vv. 11–16, 21–2):

> Ἱππόλυτος, ἁγνοῦ Πιτθέως παιδεύματα,
> μόνος πολιτῶν τῆσδε γῆς Τροζηνίας
> λέγει κακίστην δαιμόνων πεφυκέναι·
> ἀναίνεται δὲ λέκτρα κοὐ ψαύει γάμων,
> Φοίβου δ' ἀδελφὴν Ἄρτεμιν, Διὸς κόρην, (15)
> τιμᾷ, μεγίστην δαιμόνων ἡγούμενος.
>
> Hippolytus, the nursling of pure[14] Pittheus,
> is the only one in this land here of Trozen
> who keeps on saying that I am the worst of deities,
> and spurns the marital bed, and touches nothing to do with marriage,
> but honours Phoebus' sister Artemis, Zeus' maiden,
> and considers her to be the greatest among deities.
>
> ἃ δ' εἰς ἔμ' ἡμάρτηκε τιμωρήσομαι
> Ἱππόλυτον ἐν τῇδ' ἡμέρᾳ
>
> For the transgressions against me I will punish
> Hippolytus on this very day.

[13] On *mega phronein*, Goldhill 1986: 133. Cairns 1996: 10–17 argues (p. 14) that 'thinking big' and hubris, both generally and in *Hippolytus*, are 'virtually interchangeable', and he defines (p. 15) 'thinking big' in conjunction with the Nurse's statement at vv. 443–6, where she more or less reiterates Aphrodite's words from vv. 5–6, as 'resisting the power of the goddess, the sort of thing that provokes her to anger to such a degree that she retaliates by subjecting her victim to degrading and dishonouring treatment'.

[14] *Hagnos* is frequently applied to Hippolytus in the course of this play. Here, it is markedly used of a character who does not play any role in this tragedy, but the first appearance of the word coincides with the first mention of Hippolytus', name, as Segal 1970: 280 notes. Barrett 1964: 157 points out that Aphrodite does not speak of Hippolytus as *hagnos*, because his *hagneia* consists precisely of his rejection of her. In our view, the goddess could label Pittheus as *hagnos*, since Pittheus, who in sharp contrast to Hippolytus did marry and did have children, belonged to the religious realm of Aphrodite as well.

The accusations of blasphemy and of the refusal to honour the domains of sex and marriage are correct. It is due to Hippolytus' particular understanding of *sophrosyne* and *hagneia* that he avoids Aphrodite and her entire domain, to the extent of refusing to perform her ritual worship. When the servant admonishes Hippolytus to pay respect to Aphrodite after he has offered a dedication to Artemis, Hippolytus categorically refuses to do so. His explanation for this is striking (v. 102): *πρόσωθεν αὐτὴν ἁγνὸς ὢν ἀσπάζομαι*, 'I greet her from afar, being *hagnos*.'

Why does Hippolytus perceive the goddess as a threat to his purity? In Greek culture, *Aphrodisia* (the acts of Aphrodite, namely sex) were thought of as a source of relatively mild pollution. After intercourse, washing, temporary abstention, or both were seen as necessary prerequisites for entering a sanctuary, but the periods of abstention were short. As a strict general rule, intercourse on sacred ground was prohibited.[15] Maintaining virginity was also considered to be important for females before marriage, and a degree of sexual moderation was expected of *ephebes* before marriage as well.[16] However, the complete and permanent abstention from sexual activity as an expression of piety, which we associate with some aspects of Christian religion, was extremely rare in the Greek world. Those priests who, in some cults, were bound to celibacy—and then only for a certain period of time—were rather extraordinary cases.[17] Against this background, Hippolytus' sexual abstinence and permanent purity are starkly exceptional; at the same time, however, Hippolytus' pursuit of such abstention does follow the logic of Greek religious conventions, even if it takes them to an extreme. In the words of Robert Parker: 'the closer a mortal comes to sacred objects, the more acute

[15] On sex and pollution, Parker 1983: 74–103. Later texts distinguish between licit and illicit intercourse. After licit intercourse, the entry into sacred space was often allowed after simple washing. In some cases a period of time, typically one to two days, is requested, with or without reference to washing. After sex with a courtesan a period of time is requested, but here too the periods are typically short; the alleged reference to a request of thirty days after intercourse with a courtesan at *LSS* 91.18 is, as we argue in Petrovic and Petrovic 2016, a misinterpretation due to a misreading of an alpha (= one day) as a lambda (= thirty days). In rare cases we find references to 'unlawful intercourse' which permanently bars worshippers from sacred space: *LSS* 91.19, *LSAM* 20.25–50.

[16] Cairns 1997: 55–9 provides important remarks about the value and gender-specific interpretation of sexual abstinence and moderation in Greek culture, and stresses that, at Athens, *sophrosyne* (in the sense of sexual moderation) was a desirable quality for both *parthenoi* and *ephebes*. Based on the conclusion that 'The *sophrosyne* of *parthenoi*, though involving total abstinence before marriage, must give way to sexual activity afterwards; and in the case of youths, there are indications that *sophrosyne* need not require total resistance to sexual advances—a boy can allegedly be *sophron* in giving in to his *erastes*, provided his submission is private, discreet, and not immediately forthcoming', Cairns maintains (p. 57) that 'Hippolytus' lifestyle does, therefore, involve a form of *sophrosyne* analogous to that demanded of women, but this is a feature of male adolescence which marks that condition out as similar to the female, and so Hippolytus' *sophrosyne* does not in itself mark him out as unusual'. Cairns does, however, argue that Hippolytus' permanent chastity is anomalous.

[17] Parker 1983: 79–90.

becomes his need for sexual purity.'[18] As we shall see, Hippolytus frequently associates with the goddess Artemis in person: he achieves an extraordinary proximity to the divine, and because of this he sees purity not merely as a prerequisite for ritual actions, but as a way of life. Yet Hippolytus' way of life, his resolution to keep away from the realm of Aphrodite, effectively brings his social and religious development to a standstill—as has been long noted, Hippolytus refuses to complete the natural progression from the realm of Artemis to that of Aphrodite, undermining his passage to manhood.[19]

In addition to Hippolytus' fear of pollution, personal taste and ancestry influence his religious behaviour: his distaste for Aphrodite is made explicit when he states that he does not like 'divinities who are worshipped at night' (v. 106), and that 'each has his likes in gods and men alike' (v. 104).[20] His ancestry affects both his religious predilection and his social and religious behaviour.[21] Artemis was the divinity worshipped fervently among the Amazons,[22] who, as it has been observed, by alternating between virginity and promiscuity, by devoting themselves to war, and by refusing to marry, 'confuse the boundaries' between male and female.[23] Hippolytus is truly a child of his mother: he refuses marriage and, as an *ephebe*, he confuses gender values by adhering to a virginal purity typically associated with *parthenoi*.[24]

[18] Parker 1983: 91.

[19] On Hippolytus and rites of passage, Zeitlin 1985 and Goldhill 1986: 120–1. Zeitlin 1985 argues that Hippolytus does not wish to complete the ritual of transition from an *ephebe* to adulthood: he refuses (p. 56) to 'complete the initiatory scenario that would make him pass from the yoking of horses to the yoking of maidens, from the hunting of game to the hunting of a wife'. Cairns 1993: 317–18 discusses Hippolytus' unwillingness to progress from an *ephebe* to a warrior; Cairns 1997: 65–9 sees Hippolytus as (p. 65) a 'figure in transition who refuses to move on' from puberty to manhood. In Greek society young men and women were under the protection of Artemis, but they had to leave her domain and enter the sphere of Aphrodite in order to marry and produce children. On ancient Greek male and female maturation rituals, Jeanmaire 1939; Brelich 1969; Calame 1987; Sourvinou-Inwood 1988 (female); Vidal-Naquet 1981; Cole 1984; Osborne 1985: 154–72; Dowden 1989: 9–47 (female); Garland 1990: 187–91, 219–20, 229.

[20] v. 106: *οὐδείς μ' ἀρέσκει νυκτὶ θαυμαστὸς θεῶν*; v. 104: *ἄλλοισιν ἄλλος θεῶν τε κἀνθρώπων μέλει*. Tr. v. 104, Barrett 1964.

[21] As does Phaedra's—her female relatives display a proclivity for transgressive sexual passions. On Phaedra's Cretan heritage, Reckford 1974.

[22] On Artemis and the Amazons, Blok 1995: 268–9; 310–16. Blok (p. 314) argues that Hippolytus' Amazon mother (unnamed in the play) was Antiope, who was raped by Theseus, and that 'Euripides has incorporated this undesired defloration and pregnancy in his *Hippolytus*, where the hero only wants to recognize Artemis. His mother, the Amazon, and Artemis form a unit in contrast to that formed by the [gunè] Phaidra and Aphrodite.' While Euripides does not hint at how Hippolytus was conceived in the play, he certainly establishes a firm connection between him and his Amazon mother.

[23] Goldhill 1986: 127.

[24] Hippolytus even claims to have a virginal soul: v. 1006. On Hippolytus and gender, see Segal 1978; Zeitlin 1985 (on Hippolytus' virginity, pp. 66–7); Goldhill 1986: 127; Mitchell 1991: 103–6. While some scholars engage in psychoanalytical interpretations of the play, we will leave this type of reading aside, concentrating instead on the notion of the purity of the soul/mind and ritual agency.

Hippolytus' preoccupation with Artemis, however pious, will be his undoing. Hippolytus' servant diplomatically warns him about his lack of good sense with respect to Aphrodite (v. 105): *εὐδαιμονοίης, νοῦν ἔχων ὅσον σε δεῖ*, 'may you prosper [literally: 'may you be protected by a good daemon'], having as much reason[25] as you ought to have.' We have heard Aphrodite's condemnation at the beginning of the play, and we know that Hippolytus does not have a good daemon; quite the opposite—Aphrodite is slighted and decides to punish him precisely because he, among other things, openly calls her 'the worst of the daemons' (v. 13). His open declaration of dislike towards Aphrodite reaffirms her indictment of *mega phronein*. Euripides makes it evident that it is not only Hippolytus' behaviour but also his words and his mind, his thinking and reasoning about the goddess, that are problematic.

Hippolytus perceives Aphrodite as a potential source of pollution, and the goddess herself will use pollution, which she inflicts on Phaedra in the form of the passionate infatuation, a divine madness, as a weapon against Hippolytus.

Hippolytus' *sophrosyne*

Sophrosyne is a concept rooted in rationality and conscious contemplation.[26] It features prominently in all of Euripides' tragedies, and it is a central term of the *Hippolytus*.[27] In his detailed study of *sophrosyne*, Adriaan Rademaker concludes that 'Euripides uses *σώφρων* and cognates in a conspicuously greater range of sense than any of his predecessors … These include, a "sane" state of mind, "prudence"/"good sense", "respect for the gods", "control of aggression and violence", and "control of desire"'.[28]

Hippolytus' own concept of *sophrosyne* governs all aspects of his behaviour, and it is much more rigid and strict than what was deemed appropriate for a young man of his standing. Hippolytus makes this explicit when he enumerates his rules for life, all of which he subsumes under the heading of *sophrosyne*, to defend himself when his father accuses him of raping

[25] On *nous* in Euripides, Claus 1981: 56. Euripides uses the word in esoteric intellectual contexts when a dichotomy between appearance and reality is intended, or to denote the seat of intelligence or reason (especially in the phrase *νοῦν ἔχειν*).

[26] For a detailed investigation of the term *sophrosyne* and its uses in ancient literature, see Rademaker 2005. On the manifold meanings of the term in tragedy and its etymology ('the condition of having safe and sound phrenes', *σῶος φρένες*), Mikalson 1991: 180–1; see 'The Tragic Outlook on Ritual' in Ch. 7 (p. 131).

[27] For *sophrosyne* in Euripides, Rademaker 2005: 143–89. For the *Hippolytus*, Goldhill 1986: 132–4; Gill 1990; Rademaker 2005: 163–73. Halleran 1995: 45 stresses that in none of Euripides' other plays do words from the root *sophrosyne* appear so often (it is attested eighteen times in *Hippolytus*; the *Bacchae*, with twelve occurrences, is the next highest).

[28] Rademaker 2005: 188.

Phaedra.[29] For Hippolytus, *sophrosyne* encompasses a set of strict religious and social guidelines: nobody is more *sophron* than him, he states, first and foremost because he knows how to worship the gods (v. 996, *πρῶτα*); then, because he knows how to make friends with men who are righteous in word and deed and because he knows how to be an honest friend; finally, he adds, because he abstains from sex. Hence, concepts of piety, justice, honesty, and sexual abstinence all come together and mark out a distinctly Hippolytean concept of *sophrosyne*. In addition to *sophrosyne*, it is his exclusive worship of Artemis that marks Hippolytus out as unique in the Greek religious landscape.

Whereas his attitude towards Aphrodite is defined as 'having haughty thoughts', manifesting itself through blasphemy, deviation from social norms, and the refusal of ritual worship, when it comes to his devotion to Artemis we witness the opposite extreme. To illustrate this, we focus on a key passage from the opening of the play, in which Hippolytus professes his allegiance to Artemis and explains the tenets of his concepts of *sophrosyne* and purity as a foundation of his special relationship with the goddess.

Hippolytus returns from a hunt, surrounded by a throng of servants, and hymns Artemis (vv. 51–6). The following scene is a full representation of a set of rituals performed for Artemis by Hippolytus—a hymn, followed by a dedication and a prayer:

HIPPOLYTUS:
ἕπεσθ' ἄδοντες ἕπεσθε (58)
τὰν Διὸς οὐρανίαν
Ἄρτεμιν, ἃ μελόμεσθα. (60)

HIPPOLYTUS AND SERVANTS:
πότνια πότνια σεμνοτάτα, (61)
Ζηνὸς γένεθλον,
χαῖρε χαῖρέ μοι, ὦ κόρα
Λατοῦς Ἄρτεμι καὶ Διός, (65)
καλλίστα πολὺ παρθένων,
ἃ μέγαν κατ' οὐρανὸν
ναίεις εὐπατέρειαν αὐ-
λάν, Ζηνὸς πολύχρυσον οἶκον.
χαῖρέ μοι, ὦ καλλίστα (70)
καλλίστα τῶν κατ' Ὄλυμπον.

HIPPOLYTUS:
σοὶ τόνδε πλεκτὸν στέφανον ἐξ ἀκηράτου (73)
λειμῶνος, ὦ δέσποινα, κοσμήσας φέρω,

[29] vv. 995–1003: *οὐδ' ἢν σὺ μὴ φῇς, <u>σωφρονέστερος</u> γεγώς. / ἐπίσταμαι γὰρ πρῶτα μὲν θεοὺς σέβειν / φίλοις τε χρῆσθαι μὴ ἀδικεῖν πειρωμένοις / ἀλλ' οἵσιν αἰδὼς μήτ' ἐπαγγέλλειν κακὰ / μήτ' ἀνθυπουργεῖν αἰσχρὰ τοῖσι χρωμένοις, / οὐκ ἐγγελαστὴς τῶν ὁμιλούντων, πάτερ, / ἀλλ' αὐτὸς οὐ παροῦσι κἀγγὺς ὢν φίλοις. / ἑνὸς δ' ἄθικτος, ᾧ με νῦν ἔχειν δοκεῖς· / λέχους γὰρ ἐς τόδ' ἡμέρας ἁγνὸν δέμας.*

ἔνθ᾽ οὔτε ποιμὴν ἀξιοῖ φέρβειν βοτὰ (75)
οὔτ᾽ ἦλθέ πω σίδηρος, ἀλλ᾽ ἀκήρατον
μέλισσα λειμῶν᾽ ἠρινὴ διέρχεται,
Αἰδὼς δὲ ποταμίαισι κηπεύει δρόσοις,
ὅσοις διδακτὸν μηδὲν ἀλλ᾽ ἐν τῇ φύσει
τὸ σωφρονεῖν εἴληχεν ἐς τὰ πάντ᾽ ἀεί, (80)
τούτοις δρέπεσθαι, τοῖς κακοῖσι δ᾽ οὐ θέμις.
ἀλλ᾽, ὦ φίλη δέσποινα, χρυσέας κόμης
ἀνάδημα δέξαι χειρὸς εὐσεβοῦς ἄπο.
μόνῳ γάρ ἐστι τοῦτ᾽ ἐμοὶ γέρας βροτῶν·
σοὶ καὶ ξύνειμι καὶ λόγοις ἀμείβομαι, (85)
κλύων μὲν αὐδῆς, ὄμμα δ᾽ οὐχ ὁρῶν τὸ σόν.
τέλος δὲ κάμψαιμ᾽ ὥσπερ ἠρξάμην βίου.

HIPPOLYTUS (58–60):
Follow me, follow, singing of heavenly Artemis, Zeus' daughter, who cares for us.

HIPPOLYTUS AND SERVANTS (61–71):
Mistress, mistress, most revered child of Zeus, rejoice, rejoice, Artemis, daughter of Leto and Zeus, the most beautiful of virgins, you who dwell in broad heaven in the court of your noble father, in the dwelling of Zeus rich in gold. Rejoice, most beautiful, most beautiful of those who dwell in Olympus.

HIPPOLYTUS (73–87):
For you, queen, I carry this wrought wreath I fashioned from the unsullied meadow, where neither a shepherd would dare to pasture his flocks, nor did ever iron [*sc.* sickle] visit it, but a spring bee passes through the unsullied meadow. Reverence[30] cultivates it with flowing pure waters. Those who were allotted the ability to think sound thoughts (*to sophronein*) always and in all respects, by nature, not by means of education, for these it is religiously correct to pick [the flowers], but for the bad (*kakoi*), it is prohibited. Hence, dear queen, receive this coronal for your golden hair from a pious (*eusebes*) hand. Because I alone have this prerogative among mortals: with you I keep company, and with you I converse, I hear your voice, but do not see your face. May I arrive to the finish of my life, as I have started!

Hippolytus enters the scene as the leader of the chorus of his companions.[31] The company performs a hymn initiated by Hippolytus (vv. 58–60), extolling Artemis' virtues in conventional form and language, focusing on the goddess' parentage, her divine abode, and finally, and problematically, on her beauty. The invocation of Artemis as a maiden (*kora*, v. 64) or as the most beautiful among the virgins (v. 66) is common in hymns to this goddess. However, in the last two verses the language of praise veers off the usual

[30] On *αἰδώς*, see Barrett 1964: 171–2, and our later discussion in this chapter (pp. 195–6).
[31] Barrett 1964: 169.

path: Artemis is addressed not just as the most beautiful among the virgins, but as the most beautiful amongst all those who inhabit Olympus. From Aphrodite's perspective, it is with this statement that Hippolytus adds insult to injury: both Aphrodite and Artemis had *kalliste* as cult titles,[32] but praising Artemis in a hymn as specifically the most beautiful of the Olympians is remarkably unique;[33] after all, Aphrodite was the winner of the divine beauty-contest, while Artemis did not even make the top three.[34] Starting with conventional praise, the balance is tipped towards henotheism.[35] Artemis is represented as unique, surpassing all other gods in beauty, and in his dedication speech which follows the hymn Hippolytus represents himself as being similarly unique and surpassing all other humans in purity.

Purity is the central motif of this passage: The verses focus on the purity of the sacred space, the purity of the gift for the goddess, the moral purity of the dedicant—Hippolytus—and, relatedly, on the aforementioned 'Hippolytean way of life', Hippolytus' exceptional status among men, and his privileged relationship with and proximity to the divinity. Scholars have long recognized that Hippolytus' description of the meadow has a symbolic meaning,

[32] Barrett 1964: 170 for attestations.

[33] Even the long Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* (*h.Hom.* 3.197–9), which features the most captivating depiction of Artemis leading the dance on Olympus, describes her beauty as conspicuous but not superlative.

[34] Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 327 sees a slight to Aphrodite in the epithet *οὐρανία* which is attributed to Artemis in the hymn (vv. 59–60): it was Aphrodite, not Artemis, who was venerated under this cult-title at Athens.

[35] The term is derived from the ancient Greek cultic acclamation 'one is the god' (*εἷς ὁ θεός*), and it is used by Versnel 1990 to denote the Hellenistic and later religious phenomenon of singling out the one god who gives salvation and liberates humanity from its bonds, and who demands complete surrender in return. Versnel 1990: 1 points out that henotheism, as a 'tendency to direct one's affectionate devotion to one particular god', does not, however, mean that the other gods are denied existence or cultic worship. In the second chapter of his 1990 monograph, Versnel argues that Euripides was the first Greek author who, in the *Bacchae* (produced 405), represents the all-pervasive, universal worship of Dionysus as a case of henotheism, with Pentheus as the *theomachos* whose example demonstrates the terrible consequences of refusing to acknowledge the god's power. Versnel 1990: 189 concludes that Euripides 'was the first Greek author who sensed the "existence"—and the imminent approach—of gods who cherished essentially greater ambitions than any of the traditional Greek gods and whose arrival was accompanied by a radically novel religious mentality'. In our view, the *Hippolytus* too can be interpreted as an individual's attempt at henotheism, with catastrophic consequences. Hippolytus is singling out the one god, but he is also fatally refusing to acknowledge Aphrodite. Instead of receiving protection from Artemis, Hippolytus is struck by Aphrodite, whose power is frequently described as irresistible, universal, and all-pervasive. Apart from Aphrodite's initial statement of universal power (vv. 1–6), the sway of the goddess over the entire world, as well as her power over animals, humans, and gods, is exalted by the Nurse (vv. 443–56) and by the chorus in two odes (vv. 525–64 and 1268–81). On the power of Aphrodite in *Hippolytus*, see Zeitlin 1985, who (p. 61) recognizes the similarity of representations of Aphrodite in *Hippolytus* and Dionysus in the *Bacchae*. Segal 1965 demonstrates that throughout the play Aphrodite is associated with the sea, which enhances the impression of the vastness of her power and the ruthless will behind it.

as well as erotic connotations.[36] We, on the other hand, aim to explore the religious semantic potential of the meadow description in an attempt to gauge its significance for the understanding of Hippolytus' concept of piety.

As is proper for the deity of wild nature, Artemis has a consecrated meadow, described in terms which the Greeks would associate with the special status of the sacred land. The status of the sacred land was the same as that of the sanctuaries—it was clearly marked off, all activities related to sex and death were prohibited on it, and its purity had to be maintained and carefully guarded.[37] Hippolytus stresses the meadow's consecrated status first by focusing on its purity (ἀκήρατος, twice repeated: vv. 73 and 76),[38] then by mentioning the prohibitions which are familiar from the sacred regulations: no pasturing of flocks or agricultural activity is permitted on the area.[39] From practical concerns related to the protection of the sacred land,

[36] Zeitlin 1985: 64 remarks that the meadow is the 'spatial analogue of Hippolytus', who 'defines himself as unworked territory', 'outside of time that marks the seasonal activities of human culture and the cycle of human generation'. To this one could add that Hippolytus, an *ephebe*, is, in terms of the human maturation cycle, an analogue to the spring mentioned in v. 77.

Bremer 1975, building on Motte 1973: 198–232, discusses allusions to Sappho Fr. 2 V, Ibycus Fr. 286 *PMG*, and Archilochus Fr. 196a West in the meadow description; based on Motte's 1973: 208–12 catalogue of mythical heroines who were assaulted and lost their virginity in the meadow, Bremer concludes that the audiences of Euripides' *Hippolytus* would have associated the meadow with eroticism and defloration. Cairns 1997: 61–3, following Bremer, sees the meadow as pervaded with sexual images, and discusses Ibycus Fr. 286, remarking (p. 61) that it is 'hard to imagine that Euripides does not have this specific poem in mind' and (p. 63) that 'it is clear that Hippolytus is being presented as a likely sex-object'. This is very well possible, and we may here be dealing with the device—which will gain great popularity in Hellenistic poetry—of a character unwittingly alluding to various poetic passages in such a way that the allusion undermines their prima facie utterance; this device forges a connection between the poet and the reader, who are both more knowledgeable than the internal narrator. This would work very well with a character such as Hippolytus, who rejects learning and does not like to hear about sex or to see erotic images. Rather than reading into this signs of pathological repression (for a bibliographical survey of such readings, Cairns 1997: 51–2 n. 3), we see Hippolytus' depiction of the meadow as an attempt to appropriate the meadow and the nature metaphor for the religious sphere. We cannot, however, agree with Cairns 1997: 64, who (drawing on Foley's 1985: 65–105 discussion of *IA* 1463) argues that the meadows are also associated with death, and that, since they are set aside for worship, this would make them a typical locus of sacrifice. Since no cattle are allowed on the sacred ground of this particular meadow (v. 75), the idea of blood-sacrifice on this sacred ground strikes us as far-fetched.

[37] On the untilled sacred land, Parker 1983: 160–6. There were two types of sacred land: one was used, under specific circumstances, for economic exploitation and for the profit of the sanctuary or relevant cult, while the other was completely exempted from any sort of human activity. Numerous sacred regulations concern the protection of, and the regulation of activities in, such sacred spaces (the protection of vegetation; the prohibition and regulation of pasture): Lupu 2009: 26–30; a list of such regulations is found in *LSS* p. 143 and *LSCG* pp. 72 and 211. On nature as sacred space, see Mylonopoulos 2008: 54–63, with further literature.

[38] The literal meaning of ἀκήρατος is 'unmixed', and it is often used synonymously with *katharos*, 'pure', in poetry. For examples and discussions, see Moulinier 1952: 25–6, and 38.

[39] Barrett 1964: 172 correctly identifies vv. 78–81 as directly mirroring sacred regulations dealing with the rights of entry to a sacred space.

Hippolytus turns to depiction of the sacred land's secluded peace, and emphasizes again its purity by focusing on the image of Artemis' sacred animal, the bee, [40] making its way through it in the spring. The bee was perceived as exceptionally pure and chaste in Greek culture,[41] and because of these qualities bees were associated with goddesses and priestesses.[42] The bee is the only animal our passage specified as having free access to the sacred meadow, and Hippolytus, as the only individual entitled to enter and pick flowers for the wreath he offers to the goddess, clearly represents himself as a human pendant to this creature.

In a striking move from the particular and the factual, Hippolytus next visualizes the meadow in a metaphorical mode: it is *aidos* ('reverence'), here pictured as a gardener who tends his plot by watering it with pure flowing streams.[43] The concept of *aidos* plays a major role in the play, and the reference to *aidos* in this passage marks the transition in speech from the purity of sacred space to issues of moral purity.

Aidos is an important Greek ethical concept, for which there is no direct translation in English; a makeshift rendering would be 'reverence'. This concept has been discussed extensively by Douglas Cairns,[44] who argues that it is concerned with the regulation of one's proper conduct with others, acting as an inhibitor of actions which could bring disgrace to an individual or to those around him: *aidos* is 'that which renders one sensitive to the general values of society and inhibits departure from them'.[45] *Aidos* is a feeling which manifests itself in social interactions. Significantly, Hippolytus brings together *aidos* and *to sophronein*, viz. *sophrosyne* (v. 80), in his depiction of sacred space: *aidos* is associated with the cultivation of the meadow, and *to sophronein* with its exploitation. Therefore, and in keeping with the broad Hippolytean moral definition of *sophrosyne*, *to sophronein* is represented as an essential

[40] On association of Artemis and bees in cult, Bodson 1978: 38–43.

[41] For a summary of ancient Greek attitudes towards the bees, Hünemörder, *BNP*, s.v. Bees.

[42] According to a Pindar scholion (ed. Drachmann, vol. 2, *ad P.* 4106c), the priestesses were called 'bees' because of their pure lifestyle. Aristophanes famously represents Euripides quoting verses from Aeschylus' (lost) play the *Priestesses*, where the priestesses of Artemis are called μελισσονόμοι ('bee-wards'): *Ra.* 1273–4 = Aeschylus Fr. 87: εὐφαμεῖτε· μελισσονόμοι δόμον Ἀρτέμιδος πέλας οἴγειν ('Keep silent: the bee-wards approach to open Artemis' temple'). Sommerstein 1996: 270 notes that the chorus of the play might have consisted of *melissonomoi*, the priestesses of Artemis, and that the bee was one of Artemis' sacred animals, especially at Ephesus, but also elsewhere; furthermore, he sees *Hipp.* 77 as probably playing on this association of Artemis with bees.

[43] 'Dew', *drosos*, is customarily associated with pure water in tragedy, and the reference to *flowing* water alludes to the flowing water that was exclusively used, as opposed to standing water, as a purificant in cult practices: Barrett 1964: 283 with further attestations, Parker 1983: 226 and n. 105; cf. our discussion of *Hipp.* 653 in 'The Nurse's Abuse of Ritual Supplication and Oath' in this chapter (pp. 203–5). See also LSJ, s.v., Barrett 1964: 171–2, and esp. Boedeker 1984: 64: 'Despite the very broad semantic range he appropriates for drósos, Euripides nevertheless consistently uses the word in a marked way, to mean water with associations of divinity or purity.'

[44] Cairns 1993. [45] Cairns 1993: 154.

condition required to engage with the sacred space, and as a quality opposite to *kakotes*, moral badness (v. 81). In the passage the concepts of *aidos* and *sophrosyne* are linked because both are employed to moderate behaviour in accordance with the standards of what is socially acceptable and proper: *aidos* by inhibition, *sophrosyne* by careful contemplation.[46] By coupling *aidos* with *sophrosyne*, Hippolytus reveals that restraint and contemplation are central to his understanding of purity. The third important aspect of his understanding of purity is moral goodness, which he brings to the fore by laying down the rights of access to, and rules governing activity in, the sacred meadow.

The activity on the sacred meadow is formulated partly in the language of sacred regulations. As we have previously noted, the formulation *θέμις/οὐ θέμις* ('it is/is not religiously correct to') is common in texts which regulate conduct in sacred spaces,[47] and the protection of sacred groves and meadows is one of the more frequent concerns of sacred regulations.[48] Where Hippolytus departs from sacred regulations is in his articulation of the conditions for entry: instead of specifying the economic conditions, or physical purity requirements, under which it is *themis* to work sacred grounds, Hippolytus foregrounds morality as a prerequisite for entry and engagement in the sacred ground, and bans from such activities those who are morally bad (*kakoi*). According to Hippolytus, it is the ability to think sound thoughts (*to sophronein*) that qualifies one for entry. He further restricts the chosen few to those who are in possession of a *natural* rather than *acquired* ability to 'think soundly', who have this ability by their inborn nature rather than by virtue of their nurture and education (vv. 79–81). As the ritual activity of plucking flowers[49] is restricted to those who are morally good, who are

[46] For the relationship between *aidos* and *sophrosyne*, Rademaker 2005: 50–4. Cairns 1993: 314–40 discusses the concept of *aidos* in the *Hippolytus* as a motivation of both the eponymous hero and Phaedra. For Cairns, the meadow is (p. 315) 'plainly symbolic' and the association of *aidos* and *sophrosyne* in the passage is a common motif indicating young men's tendencies of 'general shyness, the modesty of their bearing, their proneness to blush'.

[47] See Ch. 4, pp. 96–7. [48] See n. 37.

[49] Picking flowers is to be understood as a ritual activity in this passage because it is regulated by a specific sacred regulation; because the flowers are goddesses' property; and because the activity results in the production of an offering, an *agalma*, for the goddess. Bremer 1975: 276 and n. 3 points out that picking leaves of the plant *asterion* and making wreaths was a ritual performed at Argos for Hera (Pausanias 2.17.2 mentions the ritual and reports that the goddess had the cult-title Antheia at Argos 2.22.1). Hesychius, s.v. *Ἠροσάνθεια*, reports that this was the name of the 'famous spring religious ritual in Peloponnesus, when women gathered flowers'. Pausanias does not specify that the Argive ritual was exclusively female, whereas the Erosantheia was apparently restricted to women. In Greek myth the motif of a virgin picking flowers is often associated with an assault by a male, resulting in a rape and a loss of virginity. For a catalogue of myths of this type, Motte 1973: 208–12. Hippolytus reformulates the matrix into a ritual act in which the *agalma* is not a maiden's virginity, to be ravished by the male aggressor, but a gift for the virginal goddess. A detail in the play may, however, have served to forge an association between Hippolytus and Persephone, the most famous virgin snatched in a meadow: Aphrodite remarks that Phaedra saw Hippolytus and fell in love with

'always and in every respect' of a sound mind, it follows that the *kakoi* are the morally bad—those who are of 'unsound mind'.

Hippolytus, then, not only presents inner, moral purity as a necessary prerequisite for performing the sacred ritual, but also insists on the innate, inborn (vv. 79–80, *ἐν τῇ φύσει … εἴληχεν*), permanent, and all-comprehensive (v. 80, *ἐς τὰ πάντ' ἀεί*) moral excellence of the performer, which he subsumes under *to sophronein*.[50] The irony of Hippolytus' position is that, precisely because he is completely and utterly pure in respect to Artemis, he offends Aphrodite. He understands this error at the end of the play, when he remarks that he had *sophrosyne*, 'but did not put it to good use' (v. 1035).

The Hippolytean Way of Life

When compared to Greek sacred regulations, Hippolytus' specification of inborn *sophrosyne* as a prerequisite for the ritual plucking of flowers is exceptional in two further respects. First of all, the stipulation of permanent purity contradicts the common practice of prescribing a temporary abstinence or avoidance of pollution as a prerequisite for entering a sacred space or performing a ritual action. Secondly, the request for an inborn quality as a prerequisite for ritual action is unique and unattested, even in cults such as 'Orphic', which requested a heightened purity and sometimes a special way of life.[51] The antithesis which Hippolytus constructs between learning and nature has attracted significant attention from critics: some commentators have noted that it resembles contemporary sophistic discourse;[52] others have contextualized Hippolytus' distinction within the philosophical discourses of the Garden and the Academy.[53] The conviction that nature (*physis*) is the

him when he went to Athens to attend the sacred mysteries of Demeter (v. 25). Kore's abduction and Demeter's search for her was the founding myth of the Eleusinian cult. On the role of this myth in the Eleusinian cult, Clinton 2007, with bibliography.

[50] Cairns 1997: 54 argues for Hippolytus' *sophrosyne* as chastity and (n. 11) provides an overview of scholars who have made this point. Translations often render *sophron*/*to sophronein* as 'chastity' or 'virginity' when it is employed by Hippolytus; while the term does indeed encompass this meaning, Hippolytus, as we argue, uses it in a much broader fashion: he employs it to designate the entirety, thoughts *and* actions, of what he thinks is a religiously correct mental attitude *in all respects* and *in all circumstances* (v. 80). Virginity is but one aspect of this concept; the other, equally important, aspect is inner purity.

[51] On the 'orphic way of life', see Ch. 12, p. 249–62.

[52] e.g. Segal 1970: 282.

[53] Berns 1973 provides a philosophical reading of *Hipp*. 73–87, focusing on the concepts of *nomos* and *physis* as foundations of Hippolytus' *sophrosyne*. She closely analyses grammatical and rhetorical constructions in the passage describing the unsullied meadow, and juxtaposes what she perceives as the ambiguity of grammatical and rhetorical links in the first part of the dedicatory section (vv. 73–81) to the 'unambiguous character' of the second part (vv. 81–7). Drawing on verse 86 (Hippolytus hears Artemis' voice, but does not see her face) and on the philosophical concepts of *nomos* and *physis* (in her section III), Berns takes the meadow description to indicate (p. 169) that 'Hippolytos has lost sight of the complexity inherent in

source of virtue (*arete*) is frequently attested in sympotic poetry and in Pindar.[54] Hippolytus' differentiation between the *kakoi*, who are banned from the sanctuary, and the *sophrones*, who are allowed entry, has also been associated by some scholars with religious circles, such as 'Orphics', who distinguish sharply between the initiated and the uninitiated.[55]

We argue instead that the antithesis stresses the differences and similarities between Hippolytus' way of life and other, teachable 'ways of life', such as those in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, the Pythagorean *akousmata*, the Empedoclean rules, and 'Orphism'. Hippolytus insists on permanent mental and bodily purity as a 'way of life', and this is also evident in his prayer to Artemis at the end of his dedication (v. 87): 'May I arrive to the finish of my life, as I have started!' In this way, his conduct is similar to the Pythagorean, 'Orphic', Empedoclean, or Hesiodic 'ways of life', inasmuch as he postulates a set of stricter and more comprehensive purity regulations which pertain not just to the preparation for ritual action but also to one's entire conduct. He wishes, however, to distance himself from the teachable ways of life by insisting that his modus vivendi cannot be acquired through learning. Rather than aligning himself with a group of initiates, Hippolytus stresses his singular and unique position in the religious landscape. Throughout this play Hippolytus will struggle to maintain his principles, even at the cost of his own life.

It is ironic that it is Aphrodite, not Artemis, who will enable Hippolytus to reach the end of his life just as he started, for he will die on this very day as a result of her intervention. It is ironic, too, that his own father, Theseus, convinced that Hippolytus has raped his stepmother, will also accuse his son of being an Orphic who engages in mystic rites and venerates the 'fumes of

both the meaning and the origin of *τὸ σωφρονεῖν*'. She takes *τὸ σωφρονεῖν* to be (p. 166) 'the key term in Hippolytos' philosophical conclusion'. Berns justifies her philosophical reading of the passage by stating that (p. 169) 'Euripides himself employs philosophical language in such a way that it becomes integral part of the drama'. The tension between the concepts of *nomos* and *physis* in Hippolytus' philosophical world-view (his rejection of the sickle, the herds, and his alleged 'acceptance of the bee', p. 172) are, according to Berns, at the core of his downfall. She argues that his failure to understand that *physis* is the ground on which *nomos* grows; that (p. 186) 'Nomos is as indispensable an end for Physis as Physis is an indispensable ground for Nomos'; and that *nomos* is '*the* key to a final understanding' of man's *φύσις*', is what makes Hippolytus a tragic hero rather than a philosopher.

[54] Barrett 1964: 173 for attestations; Hunter 2009: 30–4 argues that the Athenian audiences of the late fifth century would have associated Hippolytus' imagery with the world of the aristocratic symposium.

[55] Hunter 2009: 33–4 revisits the old question of whether Hippolytus can be associated with 'Orphism', and argues that his language and behaviour 'can be assimilated to suspect sects who claimed to find revealed truths in writings'. He discusses a set of ancient scholia that feature allegorical interpretations of the meadow description, and points out that allegorical interpretations were also employed in 'Orphic' circles (Derveni papyrus). If Hippolytus' *aidos*-allegory did intimate an association with the 'Orphic' circles and allegory, which was used both in 'Orphic' poetry and in interpretations of 'Orphic' poems, we would argue that Euripides dispels this association by having Hippolytos stress that his *sophrosyne* is *not* acquired by learning.

many books' (vv. 948–57). Hippolytus is clearly not an Orphic: as a passionate hunter (vv. 17–18) and a meat-eater (vv. 108–10) he could not be further away from the 'Orphic way of life', which his father recognizes as a vegetarian existence (vv. 953–4). Theseus employs the label as an insult, a slanderous approximation. In a similar way, he accuses Hippolytus of being a magician and a religious charlatan (v. 1038)—in Theseus' eyes, the 'Orphics', with their suspicious, book-related rites,[56] magicians, and *goetes* all represent hypocritical abusers of rituals. In reality, Hippolytus is the only person in this play who wholeheartedly and consciously performs the rituals and meditates on their meanings and consequences. A simple flowery garland gains a pious and profound significance precisely because Hippolytus thoroughly invests his entire being in its production and dedication.

At the end of his dedicatory speech Hippolytus represents himself as uniquely close to Artemis: he accompanies her and converses with her (v. 85). This remarkable association with the divine is mentioned at the beginning of the play by Aphrodite (vv. 15–19) and is referred to by other characters frequently throughout. At the end of the tragedy Artemis will personally appear to exculpate Hippolytus, and she also states that she loves him more than any other mortal and that his death is painful for her.[57] As we have noted, it is this proximity to the divine that we can perceive as dictating Hippolytus' special and exceptionally stringent rules of purity. In a way, Hippolytus' way of life and his lifelong adherence to purity will allow him not just exceptional proximity to the divine, but will enable him to become a divinity himself, as we will see later on.

What, then, entails the 'Hippolytean way of life'? It is, to some extent, an imitation of Artemis': it is she who remains a virgin, who is frequently described as *hagne*, 'pure', who presides over wild nature, and who delights in the hunt. Artemis is not, however, associated with morality; *sophrosyne* is Hippolytus' own addition. This is a necessary addition from human perspective, but not, perhaps, from the divine, since Artemis is a goddess, she does not inhabit an ordered city, and does not have to negotiate her relationships with other divinities.[58] *Sophrosyne*, on the other hand, is required among

[56] On the role of books in 'Orphism', Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2011, and our Ch. 12. For the oddity of book-guided rituals in the view of ancient Greeks, Parker 2011: 16–17.

[57] Artemis loves Hippolytus (v. 1398); he is her favourite mortal (v. 1333). She feels grief at his death (v. 1339), because the gods do not rejoice when pious men die, whereas they destroy the wicked, children, house, and all (vv. 1339–41); divine law, however, forbids her from shedding tears (v. 1396).

[58] In this play, the relationships between the gods are explained in the following manner: no god may oppose the desire of the one who wants something, but they must always stand aside (vv. 1328–30); the authority of Zeus prevents the gods from interfering in each other's conduct (vv. 1331–4); when their favourite mortals are struck by another divinity, retribution ensues (and so Artemis announces that she will personally kill Aphrodite's favourite mortal with an arrow: vv. 1420–2). In order to preserve the community, humans must negotiate their social interactions, whereas the gods do not negotiate, compromise, or make concessions.

humans due to its capacity to regulate religious and social relationships and inhibit impulsive behaviour such as aggression, violence, and passion.

His way of life and related concept of purity are decisively influenced by his wish to maintain his extraordinary closeness to Artemis: one of the reasons why Hippolytus insists on the uniqueness of his *sophrosyne* and on maintaining his 'virginal soul' (v. 1006, *parthenos psyche*) is that by doing so he sets himself apart from the common worshippers. By imitating the goddess so closely, however, Hippolytus becomes a classic 'overreacher'. Artemis presides over *ephebes* and *parthenoi*, but they have to sacrifice to her and 'appease her' before entering the sphere of Aphrodite and marrying;[59] numerous myths are structured as cautionary tales about characters who do not wish to leave Artemis' domain, but rather attempt to imitate her without transitioning into the realms of Aphrodite.[60] Hippolytus' story is similar but more profound. On the one hand, he adds a set of moral regulations to the repertoire of rules governing Artemis' way of life; on the other, his vision of *sophrosyne* becomes perilously narrow precisely because he follows Artemis all too closely—his rejection of the servant's proposal that he should sacrifice to Aphrodite (v. 102) demonstrates that his *sophrosyne* lacks *nous*. Artemis professes her hatred of Aphrodite (vv. 1301–2) and Hippolytus follows suit, very much to his detriment. Hippolytus may have achieved proximity to a divinity but this still does not allow him to act as one, and his misunderstanding of the demarcation between the divine and mortal realms is the cause of his downfall.

Hippolytus' Purity under Triple Threat: Phaedra, the Nurse, and Theseus

Scholars have long noted that Hippolytus champions a broad, morally based concept of purity.[61] Traditionally, however, his religious views have been

[59] In order to leave the domain of Artemis and make the transition into Aphrodite's realm, in many ancient Greek cities young girls had to complete the ritual which ancient authors refer to as *προτέλεια γάμων* (payment for marriage): Plu. *Moralia* 264 B (*Aet.Graec.* 4); Hesychius, s.v. *προτέλεια*; Poll. 3. 38; E. *IA* 433; 718; *Corp. paroem. gr.* 2.513). On ancient Greek male and female maturation rituals, see n. 19.

[60] Stories about attempts to imitate the goddess usually feature a female character who rejects city life and accompanies the goddess, lives in the wilderness, participates in hunts, and rejects suitors, wishing to preserve her chastity. There are two types of stories about such companions of Artemis. In the first type, maidens are forced to fall in love by Aphrodite or are raped by male divinities; regardless of the initial reason for the loss of virginity, they are subsequently punished by Artemis. The second type features heroines who reject sex, but they too cannot remain virgins forever; instead, they are metamorphosed. See on this, I. Petrovic 2004.

[61] Barrett 1964: 172 correctly emphasizes Hippolytus' 'requirement of *moral* purity', which, however, he mistakenly considers as being 'alien to the ordinary Greek cult until Hellenistic times'. Segal 1970: 297–8 sees both Phaedra's and Hippolytus' concepts of purity as moral and

interpreted as puritan and extreme; his relationship with Artemis as whimsical and as an expression of an individual, personal religion.[62] Modern critics have rarely seen Hippolytus in a favourable light, partly due to his religious views, which could be perceived as bordering on fanaticism; partly to the fact that he is so proud of his *sophrosyne* and unfaltering in his beliefs.[63] Phaedra is perceived as more likeable and more human, since she is an innocent victim of Aphrodite and because she struggles with a moral dilemma. Her valiant, but ultimately futile, attempts to withstand her passion are perceived as exculpating, to a degree, her false accusation of rape.[64]

Let us attempt to gauge how ancient audiences might have perceived Hippolytus' piety. Is Hippolytus' insistence on complete purity, including his concept of *sophrosyne*, presented and understood as whimsical and outlandish? Are his extreme behaviour and his insistence on inner purity to be condemned since they are at the root of his *hamartema*, his fatal oversight of Aphrodite's *time*? Or are the audiences invited to evaluate his behaviour as multifaceted, by weighing up the positive as well as the negative traits of Hippolytus' piety? Our discussion will focus on the three attacks on Hippolytus' purity and on the ways the internal audience (the chorus of women of Trozen) comments on his plight. We argue that, by juxtaposing Hippolytus' reflective approach to rituals to other characters' mental pollution and ritual abuse, and by having a goddess defend and deify him at the end of the play, Euripides invites the audience to ponder upon the role of the mind in ritual performance. The focus on the fatal abuse of rituals by those who instrumentalize them due to malice or in striving for personal gain throws into sharp relief Hippolytus' own reflective approach to ritual and religion.

Hippolytus' purity is threatened by Phaedra's impurity of mind, by the Nurse's abuse of rituals, and by Theseus' reckless curse. We now turn to the nature of Phaedra's affliction in order to demonstrate that Hippolytus emerges not only as a pure character, but as the only character in this play who approaches

ritual (although, in his view, there is a disjunction—'ritual or moral' purity): 'Both Hippolytus' and Phaedra's claim to purity, whether ritual or moral, is tested by the gods and shaken by cataclysmic events which throw into question who is really "pure", who "impure"'. Cf. Heath 1987: 84–5 (Hippolytus is 'blameless'); Kovacs 1987. On Hippolytus' 'complete commitment to a moral virtue', Lawrence 2013: 225–43 (quote from p. 243), with further literature. Critical view: Cairns 1993: 318–19 acknowledges that Hippolytus is morally blameless, but his contempt for Aphrodite nevertheless constitutes a transgression. We share the view that Hippolytus' henotheistic traits are the cause of Aphrodite's wrath, but we maintain that his moral purity is unquestionable.

[62] Festugière 1954: 10–18.

[63] This could have something to do with Christian bias, and with the positive connotations of modesty and humility which go hand in hand with piety in the Christian religion as opposed to paganism. On modern Christian bias in assessments of Hippolytus, Kovacs 1987: 24–5.

[64] On the views of Hippolytus and Phaedra, Mills 2002: 87–90, with an overview of scholarship.

ritual actions with inner purity, respect, and reverence. Hippolytus is truly *eusebes*, but in a family where no one else is, he is doomed.

Phaedra's Impurity of the Mind

Phaedra has come to be diseased with love for Hippolytus through no fault or error of her own. Her affliction is variously categorized as an illness and as a madness resulting from divine intervention.[65] More than this, Phaedra herself qualifies this malady as a miasma. Seeing that her mistress is demented, the Nurse's first attempted diagnosis is pollution by blood (v. 316): *ἁγνὰς μέν, ὦ παῖ, χεῖρας αἵματος φορεῖς*; ('My child, are your hands clean of blood?'). Phaedra replies (v. 317): *χεῖρες μὲν ἁγναί, φρὴν δ' ἔχει μίασμά τι*. ('My hands are pure, but my mind carries certain pollution.'). This is one of several instances where Euripides sharply distinguishes between the pollution of the body and the mind.[66] In a seminal contribution, Angelos Chaniotis has identified this passage as one of the crucial stages in the formation of the idea of the purity of mind in Greek religion.[67] In the course of the play, Phaedra's miasma of the mind is transformed into *agos*, a curse that Theseus inflicts on his son. The miasma started as Aphrodite's intervention, and its final realization will be an intervention of another god, Poseidon; however, it is the human manipulation of rituals that facilitates the transformation of Phaedra's erotic miasma into Theseus' curse-driven *agos*. Two ritual agents, the Nurse and Theseus, who are both represented as reckless abusers of rituals, contribute to the execution of Aphrodite's plan.

In a desperate attempt to elicit a confession from Phaedra, the Nurse supplicates her mistress (vv. 325–36), and Phaedra sees herself as bound by *aidos* and *sebas*, and so compelled to accept her supplication and admit her

[65] The chorus suspects divine intervention (vv. 141–50) and qualifies it as '*anieros*' at v. 147; the Nurse pronounces Phaedra mad, and diagnoses madness as divine intervention at vv. 232–8 (v. 232: *τί τόδ' αὖ παράφρων ἔρριψας ἔπος*; vv. 237–8: *ὅστις σε θεῶν ἀνασειράζει καὶ παρακόπτει φρένας, ὦ παῖ*.); Phaedra admits that she is mad and struck by the divinity (vv. 239–49, 240–1: *ποῖ παρεπλάγχθην γνώμης ἀγαθῆς; ἐμάνην, ἔπεσον δαίμονος ἄτῃ*.); the chorus perceives her as mad (v. 276, 282–3: *σὺ δ' οὐκ ἀνάγκην προσφέρεις, πειρωμένη νόσον πυθέσθαι τῆσδε καὶ πλάνον φρενῶν*), and identifies the illness as unholy passion sent from Aphrodite (vv. 764–6). On Phaedra's sick delirium as 'wandering of *phrenes*', Padel 1995: 102–6.

[66] See n. 9 in this chapter.

[67] Chaniotis 1997: 150 discusses *Hipp*. 316–17 and *Or*. 1604, and concludes: 'Mit diesen Versen des Euripides tritt in entwickelter Form der Gedanke hervor, dass der Mensch auch bei reinen Handlungen, bei einer äusserlich reinen Lebensführung doch unrein sein kann; seine Gedanken, seine Worte, der Betrug, das Lügen, der Verrat, der Wortbruch verunreinigen.' See also Chaniotis 2012: 128. The passages have been identified as representing a watershed between shame-culture and guilt-culture by Dodds 1951: 36–7. Parker 1983: 323 discusses both of these Euripidean passages and Ar. *Ra*. 355, and remarks: 'the idea of a polluted mind follows naturally from the specification in homicide law that "the planner be treated in the same way as the man who did it with his hand" (Andoc. 1.94).'

love for Hippolytus.[68] This scene is additionally significant because it lays bare how different Phaedra's and Hippolytus' perceptions of *aidos* and *sebas* are. Whereas Hippolytus perceives *sebas* as the first and most important aspect of *sophrosyne* and *aidos* as a means of purification by restraint, for Phaedra these are purely social terms, defined in respect to her Nurse, and leading to her own and Hippolytus' destruction. *Aidos* and *sebas* do not restrain and silence Phaedra; instead, they lead to the fatal admission of her love to the Nurse.

The Nurse's Abuse of Ritual Supplication and Oath

The Nurse's use of ritual supplication in this context is aimed at retrieving information rather than at immediate personal salvation or at the removal of any personal threat—the Nurse was in no danger and thus had hardly any justification for the supplication.[69] Not only does the Nurse exhibit remarkable moral laxity by claiming that since the illness was brought on by the divine it would be hubris to fight it and to 'try to best the gods' (vv. 473–5), but she also exhibits suspicious familiarity with magic (vv. 478–9, 509–12). It is under the pretence of obtaining *materia magica* from Hippolytus that the Nurse coerces him into swearing an oath that will ultimately lead to his death. We never witness the oath-swearing ritual, only Hippolytus' outrage when he learns the secret he has sworn to keep.

One feature of Hippolytus' piety which an ancient audience could have perceived as alien to religious norms and outside the standards of religious propriety is his view on pollutants—the various human and divine threats to his personal purity. We have seen that he perceives the statue of Aphrodite as potentially polluting, and that, when it comes to *Aphrodisia*, Hippolytus is not only completely inexperienced but also expresses his dislike of even hearing about sex or looking at depictions of the act.[70] Having heard the Nurse's

[68] v. 335: *δώσω· σέβας γὰρ χειρὸς αἰδοῦμαι τὸ σόν.*

[69] Naiden 2006 convincingly argues that the *supplicandus* was not bound to accept a supplicant's plea and was always free to accept or reject the request. In his analysis of the types of supplicants' requests (pp. 70–8), Naiden points out that, 'checkered' though they are, most requests are serious, often dealing with an immediate or removed threat to which supplicant is exposed; when supplicants try to obtain or impart information (p. 74), the motives Naiden singles out are: being spared, immunity from persecution, and political advantage. The Nurse's attempt at supplication before Phaedra *eventually* succeeds; the one before Hippolytus will fail. In both cases it is evident that the Nurse is employing the ritual to obtain favour (in Phaedra's case, to compel her to speak; in Hippolytus', to oblige him to silence) rather than to save her own life or to remove any direct personal threat. While Hippolytus flatly rejects the supplication, Phaedra first attempts to rebuff the Nurse's attempt (twice: vv. 325 and 333), before succumbing to her own *aidos* (v. 335); on *aidos* and *supplicandi* in Euripides, see Gould 1973: 85–7. It is noteworthy that Phaedra's initial reaction to the attempted supplication is one of surprise—in v. 325 she seems struck and violated by the Nurse's physical gesture of supplication, which she clearly finds inappropriate in the situation.

[70] vv. 1004–6.

outrageous suggestion that he should sleep with his stepmother, Hippolytus reacts with horror and disgust, wishing for a world without women, a world in which offspring can be purchased from the gods.[71] He conceptualizes the Nurse's indecent proposal as a source of pollution, and states (vv. 653–5):

> ἁγὼ ῥυτοῖς νασμοῖσιν ἐξομόρξομαι
> ἐς ὦτα κλύζων. πῶς ἂν οὖν εἴην κακός,
> ὃς οὐδ' ἀκούσας τοιάδ' ἁγνεύειν δοκῶ;
>
> These things [you propose][72] I will wipe off with flowing waters,
> having washed my ears. How could I ever be such a bad person
> as not to think that purification is necessary, having heard such things?

Why does Hippolytus express the need for ritual purification by washing? [73] The Nurse's suggestion compromises the distance that Hippolytus places between himself and Aphrodite—as we have seen, he fences himself off from Aphrodite's domain to such an extent that he does not want to hear about sex at all, let alone sex with his father's wife. Where an ordinary Greek would perhaps feel righteous indignation, Hippolytus feels polluted: in a typically Hippolytean fashion, he translates the threat to his morals into a threat of the pollution of his mind and body. In a hyper-sensory way, Hippolytus attempts to place the greatest possible distance between himself and potential pollutants, whereby polluting words, like bacilli, threaten to attack and weaken his *sophrosyne*. Since his personal concept of religious purity is so deeply rooted in the notion of moral and mental purity, his unique fear of polluting words is understandable.[74] Furthermore, it is noteworthy that he wishes to distance himself from a *kakos* (v. 654),[75] and that he identifies the act of distancing, the defence from *kakotes*, in the act of ritual washing and *hagneia*.

[71] vv. 616–26. Mikalson 1991: 145–6 observes that the tirade constitutes yet another insult to Aphrodite, as Hippolytus, by wishing for a world in which children can purchased for money, obliterates any need for her.

[72] ἅ (v. 653: ἁγὼ) refers to the Nurse's proposal, Barrett 1964: 283.

[73] The verb ἐξομόρξομαι ('I will wipe out') relates Hippolytus' wish to undo what has been done by the words and thus to immediately rid himself of pollution by ritually washing his ears with flowing water (see, on flowing water and ritual purification, n. 43).

[74] Halleran 1995: 205 on vv. 653–5 lists A. *Eu*. 448–50, E. *El*. 1292–4, *IT* 951, *Or*. 75–6, and *HF* 1155–6 'with Bond ad loc.' as examples of 'pollution from hearing'. None of these passages illustrate pollution from hearing as conceptualized by Hippolytus: all five refer to pollution incurred by bloodshed; four relate to the exile's need to be silent until purified. Isolation by silence is one of the symbolic tools employed to denote a homicide's pollution (Parker 1983: 370–1). The fifth passage refers to Helen stating that she incurs no pollution by addressing Electra (*Or*. 75–6), placing emphasis on speaking and communication rather than on the act of hearing.

[75] The differentiation of the *kakoi* from those who are granted the permission to pick flowers in Artemis' precinct is the first instance of Hippolytus' demarcation between the morally good and the *kakoi*; see 'Hippolytus' *Sophrosyne*' in this chapter (pp. 190–7).

What the audience knows at this stage, but Hippolytus does not, is that Phaedra is already polluted by the madness inflicted on her by Aphrodite: she herself has described her condition as mental pollution, a 'miasma of the mind' (v. 317). The audience knows that Hippolytus' purity is under threat, and, based on this knowledge, his wish for ritual purification cannot be interpreted as obsessively and excessively puritan,[76] but as a justified self-defence mechanism. It is also important to remember at this stage that Hippolytus' ears are the recipients of the divine voice of Artemis—they are a channel for his communication with the divine, and therefore Hippolytus' concern for their purity can be additionally justified. His striking wish to purge his ears, to 'un-hear' what he had heard, could also be interpreted as a wish to maintain the inviolability of his communication with Artemis.

This could, however, also represent an instance of Euripides' insightful psychologizing. Recent research in cognitive science has established an intrinsic connection between abstract thought about morality and concrete experience of physical cleanliness. In a classic experiment, Chen-Bo Zhong and Katie Liljenquist have observed that a threat to moral purity activates a need for physical cleansing which they called 'the Macbeth effect.'[77] The participants of the experiment were asked to recall an unethical deed from their past, and were then offered to choose a free gift, either an antiseptic wipe, or a pencil. The majority (67 per cent) chose the antiseptic wipe. Even the task of hand-copying a story about unethical acts of others provoked an increased desire for cleansing products. On the basis of these studies, Zhong and Liljenquist concluded that 'exposure to one's own and even to others' moral indiscretions poses a moral threat and stimulates a need for physical cleansing'.[78] In a follow-up study, Spike Lee and Norbert Schwarz tested the evaluation of cleansing products after two different unethical behaviours, and were able to conclude that the test-group evaluated mouthwash more positively after lying in a voice-mail, and preferred hand-sanitizer after lying in an email. They concluded 'that the embodiment of moral purity is specific to the motor modality involved in a moral transgression, making purification of the "dirty" body part more desirable than purification of other body parts'.[79] They should have called this phenomenon 'the Hippolytus effect', for Hippolytus wishes to purge the very part of the body which served as a channel for the immoral message he received.

Upon hearing of his stepmother's erotic infatuation with him, Hippolytus' immediate urge is to break the oath of silence by speaking out (vv. 603–4). The Nurse, however, abuses the ritual for the second time as we see her

[76] Along the lines of Theophrastus' superstitious man.

[77] Zhong and Liljenquist 2006. The reference is based on Lady Macbeth's hope that washing will remove the stain caused by murder of King Duncan: Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, V. i. 38.

[78] Zhong and Liljenquist 2006: 1452.

[79] Lee and Schwarz 2010: 1424.

attempting to supplicate Hippolytus, who refuses her supplication (vv. 606–8).[80] In a desperate attempt to prevent him from disclosing the secret, the Nurse reminds him of the binding character of the oath he has taken (vv. 611–12):

> NURSE:
> *ὦ τέκνον, ὅρκους μηδαμῶς ἀτιμάσῃς.*
>
> HIPPOLYTUS:
> *ἡ γλῶσσ' ὀμώμοχ', ἡ δὲ φρὴν ἀνώμοτος.*
>
> NURSE:
> Child, do not at any cost disrespect the oath!
>
> HIPPOLYTUS:
> The tongue has sworn the oath, the mind is unsworn.

Hippolytus' reply is one of the most famous lines from tragedy and one which apparently created a furore among ancient audiences. Aristotle reports that the line was used against Euripides in a court case to indicate his alleged promotion of perjury.[81] Comic playwrights seem to have found the verse particularly inviting for parodies—Aristophanes alone alludes to it three times.[82] The reasons for the popularity of this line are disputed: while some scholars perceive it as undermining elementary moral values of the Athenians, others stress its literary qualities.[83] In our view, what was new and striking

[80] See Henrichs 1994/5: 64 who observes that: 'in tragedy, ritual remedies employed to gain undue advantage … ultimately prove ineffective and bring about transformation to those who turn to them.' Naiden 2006: 129–62 analyses cases of rejected supplications both in historical sources and in tragedy, and provides common reasons for rejections (pp. 133–46: being hateful to gods; insincere supplicants; wrongdoings towards others by supplicants), and lists instances of rejected supplications in drama (p. 163). In Naiden's classification, the Nurse would be rejected on the grounds both of being insincere—employing, as she does, the ritual for a wrong purpose—and wrongdoing, for she has made Hippolytus swear an oath on religiously questionable grounds and for a morally suspect purpose. For other instances of supplicants' improper requests rejected by *supplicandi*, Naiden 2006: 161 (on supplications in Euripides, pp. 315–16).

[81] Aristotle reports that a certain Hygiainon, in the context of a trial concerning '*antidosis*' (the transfer of compulsory liturgy from one citizen to another), apparently attempted to undermine Euripides' oath laid before the court by explicitly referring to *Hipp*. 612. On this, Arist. *Rh.* 1416a28–35, with Avery 1968: 21–4, and Mikalson 1991: 85 and 227–8 with further evidence. On another trial and Cleon's persecution of Euripides for impiety, see n. 83.

[82] Ar. *Th.* 275–6; *Ra.* 101–2, and 1471.

[83] *Thesmophoriazusae* was performed in 411, *Frogs* in 405 BC, hence seventeen and twenty-three years respectively after the first performance of *Hippolytus*, and a decade and a half after the trial at which Cleon (d. 422) accused Euripides of *asebeia* (*P.Oxy.* IX, 1176, col. x, ll. 15–22). We do not know if Cleon made use of *Hipp*. 612 in court. In fact, we cannot be certain that Cleon's trial ever took place; it could have been a fiction of late biographers (cf. Dover 1976: 42–6). We do not know when Hygiainon's *antidosis* trial, at which he did make use of *Hipp*. 612 as Euripides' morally reprehensible statement, took place. Avery 1968 makes an ingenious case that the line was so popular at Athens not because of its 'immorality' but because of its literary qualities, as it encapsulates the main motifs of the play: the tension between inner truth and outward appearance, the essence and the impression. In Avery's view, it is not until *Frogs* of 405

about this verse is the clear demarcation of body and mind as separate ritual agents, with the implication of their ability to act independently of one another. The mind is clearly conceptualized here as separate from the physicality of ritual utterance; a speech act is divorced from a thought act. This demarcation of the mind and action spotlights the agency of the mind in rituals and compels the recipients of the play to ponder on the oath-taking ritual and perhaps observe the rituals from a different perspective. In fact, throughout this play Euripides stages a series of clashes between appearance and essence, rhetoric and motivation, and reflects on discrepancies between action and thought. Hippolytus' statement regarding his oath is clearly a mirror of Phaedra's words about the dichotomy of hands and mind in the case of her miasma.[84] Hippolytus stresses that the ritual performance has not been complemented by spiritual investment on his part; the tongue is not supported by thought. Taken out of context, the statement is an outrageous subversion of one of the most important, sacred, and binding societal and religious rituals:[85] the very idea that utterance can be divorced from thought in the context of an oath leads directly to the destabilization of the basic premise on which the oath is grounded.

But what exactly was the content of Hippolytus' oath, and how does this statement play out in the context of this tragedy? Presumably, the content of the oath was that he would not reveal what the Nurse was about to tell him. Therefore, he obliged himself to keep a secret before he knew what it was. Shocked by the impious and transgressive suggestions, Hippolytus *momentarily* lapses[86] and questions the efficacy of the oath-swearing ritual. He is aware that he has sworn the oath, but what he is underscoring in verse 612 is

BC that the line is presented on stage as morally questionable. When Aristophanes does make use of *Hipp*. 612 in such manner in his *Frogs*, it is in consequence of the Hygiainon trial, at which, Avery assumes, Hygiainon (p. 25) 'cited it out of context and perverted its meaning, so that the line took on a second life in its new guise, a life picked up by Aristophanes for comic purposes'. This is partly derived from an assumption that (p. 21): 'No matter how prodigious the literary memory of the Athenians was, it seems excessive to expect them to remember one line from a tragedy produced seventeen years before one comedy and twenty-three years before the other.'

[84] As noted by Zeitlin 1985: 81. She remarks that the secret, by its very nature (p. 80), 'alienates the self from its exterior space and divides the self into two. For in disjoining that which can be said from that which cannot, the action of the secret creates a distinction between public and private, self and other.' One could argue that this is precisely the reason why the secret affects Hippolytus most dramatically—because it undermines and fundamentally corrupts his attempt to maintain the unity of thoughts, body, and behaviour.

[85] On the importance of the oath in ancient Greek society, see Ch. 4, pp. 85–7.

[86] Zeitlin 1985: 81 and Mikalson 1991: 86 argue that Euripides does not question the validity of oath-taking as such. Hippolytus does uphold his oath, and therefore we need to view the statement in the context of the play. Aristophanes, alongside some modern critics, read the line outside of its original context. Mikalson 1991: 86 concludes that it is 'ironic and most unfair that this line, spoken by a character proven, in all of tragedy, most loyal to oaths in the most trying and tragic circumstances, should have laid Euripides open to ancient and modern charges of impiety, promoting perjury, and hostility to traditional religion'.

that he did so unaware of the terrible burden that will be imposed on him. Hippolytus is clearly shocked and outraged—he vents his anger in a tirade against the whole female sex, and he wishes to purify his ears—yet at the end of his speech he resolves to adhere to the words he had uttered, since he is obliged by his notion of *eusebeia* (vv. 656–8):

> *εὖ δ' ἴσθι, τοὐμόν σ' εὐσεβὲς σῴζει, γύναι·*
> *εἰ μὴ γὰρ ὅρκοις θεῶν ἄφαρκτος ἡρέθην,*
> *οὐκ ἄν ποτ' ἔσχον μὴ οὐ τάδ' ἐξειπεῖν πατρί.*
>
> Know this well, woman, that my piety (*to eusebes*) saves you;
> had I not been trapped with divine oaths when I was off my guard,
> I would not have endured not telling this to my father.

Hippolytus really was 'trapped and caught off his guard', precisely because he did not suspect what the secret he swore to keep was. The Nurse treacherously compelled him to do something which even she herself admits was a grave transgression against a ritual (vv. 674–7):

> *πῶς δὲ πῆμα κρύψω, φίλαι;*
> *τίς ἂν θεῶν ἀρωγὸς ἢ τίς ἂν βροτῶν* (675)
> *πάρεδρος ἢ ξυνεργὸς ἀδίκων ἔργων*
> *φανείη;*
>
> How will I hide this transgression, friends?
> Which of the gods would appear to assist me and which of humans
> would associate with me, be a helpmate in unjust deeds?

In the eyes of Phaedra, too, the Nurse's deed was bad (vv. 706–7). Not only, therefore, does Hippolytus remain loyal to his oath while outraged and shocked; he does so even though the revelation of the truth could have saved his life (vv. 1060–4).

Theseus' Abuse of the Curse

Phaedra hangs herself and leaves the notorious note in which she accuses Hippolytus of a sexual assault. The note is attached to her *hand* (v. 856). This is significant in light of her previous statement that her hand is free of miasma but her mind is polluted (v. 317). Now both her mind and her hands are polluted.[87] Theseus returns from consulting an oracle (v. 792), finds the note, and before even confronting Hippolytus he uses one of the three curses

[87] As noted by Segal 1970: 281.

which his father, Poseidon, granted him and curses his son, wishing for his death on that very day (vv. 887–90).

Like Phaedra, Theseus carries a miasma: at the beginning of the play Aphrodite reveals that he has left Athens and currently resides in Trozen (v. 35): *μίασμα φεύγων αἵματος Παλλαντιδῶν* ('being an exile because of the blood-stain of the Pallantidae'). The Pallantidae were the sons of Aegeus' half-brother Pallas, Theseus' cousins, who disputed Theseus' right of succession.[88] The murder is attested in myths before Euripides, but Theseus' exile because of the blood-guilt is Euripides' invention. It is mentioned only once in the play, and yet it is highly significant because it juxtaposes Hippolytus to not one but two polluted family members who destroy him, each in their own way. Theseus did not even question his son—he cursed him before seeing him and hearing his voice.[89]

Theseus' curse is another example of a human who abuses a ritual without any contemplation. When Artemis appears at the end of the play to reveal the whole truth about Hippolytus, she personally accuses Theseus of misappropriating and abusing the ritual and of manipulating divine powers (vv. 1286–9, 1318–24). She charges Theseus with the misuse of a curse, since he curses his son instead of an enemy; with incorrect ritual procedure, since he curses his son before allowing a prophet, evidence, or time to justify the charges; and with the morally reprehensible use of divine powers. Theseus' moral turpitude is evident in his misuse of the prerogative given to him by Poseidon; consequently, both Artemis and Poseidon consider Theseus to be a *kakos* (v. 1320; cf. v. 1316: *ὦ κάκιστε σύ*).

Hippolytus, who has spent his life in a pursuit of the ideal of bodily and moral purity, is, with tragic irony, accused of an act of sexual violence which he did not commit and is convicted to death by the most terrible and horrifying type of pollution: divine *agos*. Theseus not only sentences his son to death by cursing him but also repeatedly accuses Hippolytus of having bad, evil *phrenes*, and even brands him as a source of pollution (vv. 946–51):[90]

> *δεῖξον δ', ἐπειδή γ' ἐς μίασμ' ἐλήλυθα,*
> *τὸ σὸν πρόσωπον δεῦρ' ἐναντίον πατρί.*
> *σὺ δὴ θεοῖσιν ὡς περισσὸς ὢν ἀνὴρ*
> *ξύνει; σὺ σώφρων καὶ κακῶν ἀκήρατος;*
> *οὐκ ἂν πιθοίμην τοῖσι σοῖς κόμποις ἐγὼ* (950)
> *θεοῖσι προσθεὶς ἀμαθίαν φρονεῖν κακῶς;*

[88] See Barrett 1964: 162–3 and Halleran 1995: 150.

[89] Ironically, the same Theseus launches into a tirade, wishing for humans to have two voices, one just and one ordinary, so that the just voice can reprehend the other (vv. 925–31).

[90] Theseus wishes that there were a way to teach Hippolytus *phronein* (v. 920); wishes for a reliable diagnosis of the *phrenes* (vv. 925–31); and accuses his son of being audacious and brazen in his *phrenes* (vv. 936–7). Hippolytus is also accused of being a seducer and plotter of evil (vv. 1068–9), of committing hubris (vv. 1072–3), and of worshipping himself (vv. 1080–1).

> Show your face, here in front of your father, since I have now acquired the pollution. Are you then the one surpassing the others, the one who associates with gods? Are you of sound mind and inexperienced in evil? Am I to believe your boasts and in this way prove myself to think bad thoughts since I would suppose that the gods are ignorant?

What Theseus says ironically is actually true; what he really means is, perversely, false—Hippolytus was not a source of miasma for his father, but Theseus, having cursed him, has now polluted his own son with divine *agos*. Theseus acted rashly, without contemplation or careful thought about the act of cursing, and by doing this he demonstrated the *kakotes* of his mind. It is, therefore, Theseus' mind which now causes Hippolytus' destruction: his lack of contemplation in the moment of ritual action causes, by proxy of the curse and through the agency of Poseidon, his son's death. It is due to his lack of *sophrosyne* that Theseus cursed, and this is why, at the end of the play, he is polluted and in need of purification. It was the irresponsible, unthinking, murderous mind of Theseus, not his hands, that brought him pollution by homicide—his miasma was generated by the intention, the mental resolve to kill, not a physical act.

Hippolytus will, in his last moments, free his father of the pollution that Theseus has brought upon himself by condemning his son to death (vv. 1448–50). Now, however, Theseus accuses Hippolytus of religious hypocrisy[91] and all of Hippolytus' protestations of innocence are in vain—he is exiled and is soon lethally injured by the bull sent forth by Poseidon in fulfilment of Theseus' curse.

Hippolytus' Plight from the Perspective of the Internal Audience

The second part of the play features a range of characters—groups and individuals, human and divine—who express positive views about Hippolytus. He does not go into exile alone, but followed by a 'countless throng of friends and age-mates';[92] the Messenger rejects the very idea that he could be anything but ἐσθλός (*esthlos*; vv. 1249–54), and relates how, when Hippolytus was attacked by the bull, many tried to save him (v. 1243). Most significantly, in our view, his plight deeply affects the chorus of women of Trozen. When he is cursed and exiled, they reflect on the agency of the gods and the nature of human fortune and, in a choral ode, they display a remarkable transition from praise of the gods to a critical view of their influence in human life. In

[91] He perceives Hippolytus as an 'Orphic' (vv. 952–4); see 'The Hippolytean Way of Life' in this chapter (pp. 198–9).

[92] vv. 1179–80: μυρία δ' ὀπισθόπους / φίλων ἅμ' ἔστειχ' ἡλίκων <θ'> ὁμήγυρις. See also vv. 1098–9.

depicting the chorus' change of heart, Euripides focuses on their mind. The women of Trozen[93] say (vv. 1102–3):

> *ἦ μέγα μοι τὰ θεῶν μελεδήμαθ', ὅταν φρένας*
> *ἔλθῃ, λύπας παραιρεῖ.*
>
> The care of the gods, when it comes into my mind, greatly indeed removes my sorrows.

Despite starting with this pious and comforting thought, the chorus turns to Hippolytus' fate and, strikingly, states (vv. 1120–5):

> *οὐκέτι γὰρ καθαρὰν φρέν' ἔχω, παρὰ δ' ἐλπίδ'* (1120)
> *ἃ λεύσσω·*
> *ἐπεὶ τὸν Ἑλλανίας φανερώτατον ἀστέρ' Ἀφαίας*
> *εἴδομεν εἴδομεν ἐκ πατρὸς ὀργᾶς*
> *ἄλλαν ἐπ' αἶαν ἰέμενον.* (1125)
>
> Because no longer do I have a pure mind, what I see is beyond expectation, for we have seen the brightest star of Greece and Aphaea,[94] we have seen him driven to another land because of his father's wrath.

This change of heart is remarkable, and testifies to the fact that, within the world of the play, Hippolytus was perceived not as a religious fanatic but rather as a shining example of moral excellence. It is significant that the chorus is composed of women who have witnessed Phaedra's plight and torture, and who would be least likely to display favouritism towards Hippolytus, especially after his tirade against women. Hippolytus' moral excellence has an effect on the chorus' perception of piety and, paradoxically, it is his moral purity and piety that transforms the religious sentiment of the women. Seeing him destroyed pollutes their mind, which was previously pious and comforted by religious contemplation. Their emotions are affected to such an extent that they state that they *are wroth against* the gods (vv. 1145–6): *φεῦ, μανίῳ θεοῖσιν*.[95]

The chorus clearly sympathizes with Hippolytus; their outrage serves as an invitation for the audience to observe and acknowledge the positive

[93] Some participles in *strophe* a of this ode are masculine, which lead some editors to assign portions (*strophe* a) to the male chorus of servants, who perform the hymn to Artemis at the beginning of the play, and the antistrophes and epode to the female chorus of the women of Trozen. Sommerstein 1988: 35–9 demonstrates that this is extremely unlikely, and argues for a female chorus throughout.

[94] The last word of v. 1120 is disputed; see Barrett 1964: 373 and Halleran 1995: 247.

[95] Halleran 1995: 248 points out that this statement is unusually strong and finds no parallel for a tragic chorus. Kovacs 1987: 63 remarks that already the chorus' comments in vv. 981–2 clearly refer to Hippolytus' situation, which 'serves to direct our sympathies toward Hippolytus, as he begins his speech in defense'.

aspects of Hippolytus' behaviour. In addition to the human internal audience, at the end of the play Artemis appears on the stage to express her sympathy with Hippolytus and to exculpate him. She does this by 'demonstrating his righteous mind' to Theseus (vv. 1287–9): *ἀλλ' ἐς τόδ' ἦλθον, παιδὸς ἐκδεῖξαι φρένα / τοῦ σοῦ δικαίαν* ('But I came for this reason, to clearly *reveal the righteous mind* of your son'). The goddess accuses Theseus of killing Hippolytus 'in a religiously incorrect way' (v. 1298, *παῖδ' οὐχ ὁσίως σὸν ἀποκτείνας*) by abusing the curse; she explains that the Nurse revealed Phaedra's infatuation to Hippolytus under oath, and that he, 'as was righteous' (v. 1307, *dikaion*), being pious (v. 1309, *eusebes*), did not reveal it. Theseus is a *kakos* in the eyes of the gods (vv. 1316, 1320). Hippolytus, on the other hand, is represented as the mortal most beloved by Artemis (v. 1333), as the model of piety, and, in a direct address to Hippolytus, Artemis tells him that it was 'the nobility' of his mind that was the cause of his undoing (v. 1390):[96] *τὸ δ' εὐγενές σε τῶν φρενῶν ἀπώλεσεν* ('The nobility of your mind has destroyed you'). Hippolytus demonstrates this true 'nobility of mind' by forgiving his father after Artemis discloses the true cause of his destruction. He even tells Theseus: 'I pity you more than me, because of your error' (v. 1409). As a reward for Hippolytus' piety and the virtue of his *phrenes*, Artemis institutes his cult in Trozen.[97]

At the end, Theseus expresses a concern about his miasma. The text of verse 1448 that is printed in all editions of the play is the following:

> THESEUS:
> *ἦ τὴν ἐμὴν ἄναγνον ἐκλιπὼν χέρα;*
>
> Will you really leave me with an impure hand?

Six out of the ten best manuscripts of the play, however, transmit *φρένα* instead of *χέρα*.[98] Editors have discarded this reading, assuming that the impurity of *phren* is 'not plain man's language but sophistication', and that

[96] By referring to '*τὸ δ' εὐγενές*' of Hippolytus' *phrenes*, Artemis also evokes Hippolytus' convictions (stated in the meadow description, vv. 78–81) concerning 'natural' and innate *sophrosyne*. The natural, inborn quality of his *phrenes*, his *eugeneia* acquired by birth rather than learning, is recognized as a factor contributing to Hippolytus' doom.

[97] v. 1419: *σῆς εὐσεβείας κἀγαθῆς φρενὸς χάριν*. Hippolytus will receive hair offerings from *parthenoi* before marriage. This was a ritual of transition of young maidens into womanhood. See Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 329–30. Zeitlin 1985: 64–6 offers a splendid analysis of the temporal significance of the hero-cult rituals in relation to Hippolytus' futile attempts to avoid sexuality and halt the temporal flow of life. She neglects to stress, however, that the cult established for Hippolytus in Trozen was not a hero-cult, but a divine cult.

[98] Manuscript group *Λ* in Barrett's classification (= manuscripts HCDEL), and attested also in *Λ* from the second group of manuscripts that Barrett labels *Ω* (= manuscripts MBOA). Furthermore, *φρένα* is also attested as alternative reading in manuscript B, noted with the formula *γράφεται* and labelled in Barrett's apparatus as *γ*B. *χέρα*, on the other hand, is attested in three manuscripts: BO of *Ω*, and in the hybrid manuscript Barrett labels V; *χέρα* is also

the variant is 'a pedantic correction by someone concerned to insist that Th[eseus] had not killed him with his own hand, was not *αὐτόχειρ* but *βουλεύσας θάνατον*'.[99] In our opinion, *phren* suits the context much better than *cheir* for the following reasons: it is clear that in the eyes of Artemis and Poseidon it is Theseus' mind that is polluted—and he pollutes it by cursing his son. The purity of the mind plays a pivotal role in this play: Phaedra has a polluted mind (v. 317), and the chorus laments the fact that their minds are no longer pure (v. 1120); it is fitting that now, having heard the truth about his son's innocence, Theseus concludes that his own mind is impure. The closing conversation between father and son also revolves around the purity of the mind—when he has been purified by Hippolytus, Theseus is finally able to recognize that his son's mind (*phren*) is pious and good (v. 1454): *οἴμοι φρενὸς σῆς εὐσεβοῦς τε κἀγαθῆς* ('Woe, for your pious and good *phren*!'). Furthermore, the idea of the ritually impure mind also appears in Euripides' *Orestes*, where Menelaus is accused of having a polluted mind because he has refused a supplicant (v. 1604).[100]

Hippolytus, the God

Hippolytus' closeness to Artemis is rarely discussed by scholars; we, however, see it as the key for understanding Hippolytus' conduct. Since he associates with the pure, virginal huntress and hears her voice, Hippolytus desperately attempts to preserve the inviolability of his body and mind to pollution. He perceives himself as the most *sophron* man, and this conviction is rooted in reality, since he really does have an exclusive and privileged contact with the divine. By presenting a friendship between a human and a divine being, Greek myths often stress the abyss separating the two spheres, and this play is no exception. Rejecting Aphrodite, possessing permanent purity, and remaining an unmarried virgin forever are Artemis' prerogatives, but human beings must mature and grow old, and they must acknowledge Aphrodite in order to have children. Incurring pollution through biological events such as defloration, sex, and childbirth is what makes humans human, and what ultimately separates them from the gods. Hippolytus avoids all of this and, at the end, Artemis' special favour for him is to preserve his ephebic status forever.

One significant detail at the end of the play is also often neglected in discussion of Hippolytus' character—the cult which Artemis establishes for him is not the hero-cult which he had at Athens,[101] but a divine cult in Trozen

attested as alternative reading, noted with the formula *γράφεται*, in A and D (in the case of A as an addition by a later hand).

[99] Barrett 1964: 415. [100] See 'Orestes' in this chapter (pp. 217–28).

[101] At the beginning of the play Aphrodite alludes to the hero-cult Hippolytus had at Athens. When Phaedra fell in love with Hippolytus, she established a temple to Aphrodite (vv. 32–3):

(vv. 1424–5): *τιμὰς μεγίστας ἐν πόλει Τροζηνίᾳ / δώσω·* ('I will give you the greatest honours in the city of Trozen'). While Hippolytus was a hero at Athens, he was a god in Trozen.[102] There he had an ancient cult and a large extramural sanctuary. Pausanias reports that he saw the 'very famous precinct, in which is a temple with an old image' of Hippolytus in Trozen, and he was told that the maidens in Trozen sacrifice locks of hair to the god before marriage.[103] This is in keeping with Artemis' words at the end of the play (vv. 1425–30).

If we keep in mind that Hippolytus becomes effectively a god at the end of the play, we may see his story in a different light. His lifelong purity, his association with the divine, his conviction that he is the most pious and singular person in Trozen, even his refusal to worship Aphrodite, could all be perceived as indications that he is something other than human. There can be little doubt that Hippolytus perceives himself as different and, in a way, as living outside the communal norms determining human life. Hippolytus' 'thinking big' sets him apart from his society in more than one respect; he sets his mind on ideas and ideals beyond the reach of ordinary humans. He has little interest in social life, he rejects even the thought of procreation, and he shows narrow-mindedness and a significant feeling of entitlement in his communication with other humans. His inability to learn to become a constitutive part of society, his unwillingness to subdue his ideals and fit them to even the minimal communal expectations—all of which derive from his ideal of natural rather than taught *sophrosyne*—are at the core of his conception of self.

In human interactions, Hippolytus persistently shows a lack of understanding for the ambiguity and ambivalence of human existence; he is incapable, for example, of empathy for Phaedra. His preferred mode of communication is ritual, and almost exclusively so. For Hippolytus, language is a potential cause of threat (pollution) and evidence of a *lack* of *sophrosyne*: when Theseus confronts him about Phaedra's accusations, Hippolytus' immediate reaction is to praise his father's rhetorical skill and to state that, while he is unable to deliver fine speeches himself, he is pleased with that, since those who are so capable are typically less wise (vv. 985–90). His communication is successful only when it comes to his companions and the select few (v. 987)—when it comes to his father, the Nurse, or, it would seem, society at large, Hippolytus lacks any appropriate words. Instead, in order to prove his innocence, he recalls his own *sophrosyne* and lays down an oath, an oath praised by the

Ἱππολύτῳ δ' ἔπι / τὸ λοιπὸν ὀνομάσουσιν ἱδρῦσθαι θεάν ('and men shall hereafter name the goddess as established over Hippolytus'). There was a temple of Aphrodite in the precinct of Hippolytus at Athens, and Hippolytus had a hero-cult there. See on this Halleran 1995: 21–2. On the status of Hippolytus as a hero at Athens, see also Larson 2007: 123.

[102] Burkert 1979: 111–18; Musti and Torelli 1986: 320–2; Larson 2007: 123–4.

[103] 2.32.1–4.

chorus but dismissed by Theseus as incantations of a sorcerer (vv. 1036–40). Similarly, his communication with divinities is reduced to one divinity—Artemis—and throughout the play Hippolytus reveals a deep-seated indifference towards Aphrodite. Hippolytus' exclusivity in human and divine interactions; his sense of entitlement to shape his life in an individualistic way and outside of the common societal patterns; his propensity to communicate with ritual; and his self-understanding as *sophron* all point towards his liminal status. For Hippolytus as a human, such behavioural patterns mark him out as an outsider and put him in utmost danger. Such behaviour is reserved for gods, and in order to acknowledge Hippolytus' detachment from humans and to reward his outstanding *sophrosyne*, Artemis makes him a god.

Throughout this play Euripides traces the manifestations and metamorphoses of various types of pollution. At the start of the play Phaedra's hands are pure, but her mind has a miasma. She then accepts the Nurse's proposal to use magic and, after the Nurse's catastrophic intervention, she hangs herself and pollutes her hand by attaching to it a slanderous letter. Phaedra's miasma starts in the mind and ends as a pollution of the hand that wrote the letter. Theseus begins the play as a man who is exiled because his hands are polluted by kindred blood. He pollutes his mind by cursing his own son, and at the end of the play it is only the intervention of Hippolytus that saves him from complete pollution. Hippolytus is targeted by two types of metaphysical pollution: first, there is a polluted *nosos*, erotic madness, sent by Aphrodite; then there is a curse which inflicts divine *agos*, and here the human, Theseus, manipulates the god, Poseidon, who condemns Theseus' action but is nevertheless bound by his own promise to execute the curse. Rituals in the *Hippolytus*, whether they are performed rashly or carefully considered, regularly carry consequences corresponding to and reflecting the intentions of the minds as ritual agents.

In the final scene of the play it becomes evident that only gods can see into the minds of humans and assess their motivation for ritual action. It is this motivation, the way humans approach ritual actions, that incites the gods to perceive them as good or bad: Artemis defends Hippolytus by publicly providing an assessment of his mind, and condemns Theseus by demonstrating that his mind was *kakos* when he performed the curse. Hippolytus' demand for lifelong purity might have been perceived as excessive, but the other characters in the play, through their abuse of rituals and their recklessness, can surely be perceived as a warning to all: thoughts matter, and the gods are watching. Mental disposition in the context of ritual actions determines their outcome.

Euripides' repeated focus on the dichotomy of and the discrepancy between mind and body as ritual agents spotlights the role of contemplation in ritual actions. The matter of the tongue versus the mind in the oath ritual, the miasma of the hands versus the miasma of the mind, and the corresponding

tension between intention and realization are all inviting the audiences to think about their own inner disposition in the moment of ritual action. The idea of the interdependence of the purity of the worshipper and the value of the offering is memorably exemplified in Hippolytus' meadow description—these issues take the centre-stage and prompt the viewers to assess and re-assess their own ritual practices. What makes my offering valuable in divine perception? Is it the intention with which I make the offering or is it the value of the gift? What kind of inner disposition will increase the value of my gift and make the gods well disposed towards me? Does my state of mind in the moment of ritual action matter? Am I closer to the gods the purer I am? Is the degree of closeness to the divine also meant to determine the level of purity of the worshipper? If we purify our bodies in order to encounter the gods 'on their own terms' in their sanctuaries, should we also pay more attention to thinking pure thoughts? In the *Hippolytus*, the perception of ritual efficacy is persistently predicated on the worshippers' inner disposition, and the playwright channels this idea by staging the central rituals of the Greeks—the oath, the prayer, the dedication.

ORESTES, PERFORMED IN 408 BC

Summary: Orestes is polluted by matricide and suffers from an illness, a derangement of the mind, brought about by the vengeful Erinyes. Since the Argive assembly has expelled both Electra and Orestes as polluted matricides, Orestes' only hope is the supplication of Menelaus. However, Menelaus rejects him, partly because he fears the loss of Tyndareus' political support in Sparta, and partly because he has his mind set on the Argive throne. In this play pollution is used as a weapon in the political power-struggle: Menelaus asserts that Orestes cannot rule the land, since he is polluted and so should not perform religious rituals as a representative of the community; Orestes maintains that Menelaus is no better a candidate for a leader, since he has a polluted mind (v. 1604: *phrenes*).

All the main characters in the play are polluted, and the tragedy focuses not only on the different characters' views on one another's types and degrees of pollution, but also on Orestes' ambivalent and tormented state of mind, which is reflected in his conflicting and contradictory views of his own pollution. The state of mind in the context of ritual actions such as supplication, libations, and pre-battle sacrifices plays a vital role in this tragedy, as does the question of guilty conscience and the status of the murderer's mind after a crime. Orestes is not only plagued by the god-sent madness; he also expresses remorse, sorrow, and doubt in divine agency, and, as a consequence, he is able to reflect on his deed as being both god-ordained and divinely sanctioned, and a horrible crime against nature.

The separation of mind (*phrenes*) and body in the ritual context is attested twice in Euripides' extant plays.[104] We have discussed Hippolytus' swearing with his tongue but not with his mind in the previous section; in *Orestes*, purity of mind is also mentioned in a ritual context as one of the necessary prerequisites for pre-battle sacrifices. As in *Hippolytus*, so also in *Orestes* all the main characters are associated with some kind of pollution, and all commit transgressions of rituals. It is an action-packed, fast-paced thriller, culminating in the kind of hair's-breadth escape from danger made possible by a *deus ex machina* Euripides was famous for. By featuring a cast of polluted characters, Euripides invites the audience to reflect on various types and degrees of miasma, and draws its attention to the role of conscience and self-reflection. One of the most important deliberations on the significance of inner purity and pollution is found in a scene towards the end of the play.

Menelaus returns to the palace at Argos and sees Orestes, his daughter Hermione, Electra, and Pylades on the roof of the palace. Orestes holds his sword to Hermione's throat. In a heated discussion, Orestes threatens to burn down the palace (v. 1594) and announces his ambition to rule the land afterwards (v. 1600). Menelaus comments ironically on Orestes' suitability to perform the religious rituals expected from a ruler (vv. 1602–5):[105]

MENELAUS: *εὖ γοῦν θίγοις ἂν χερνίβων…*
ORESTES: *τί δῆτα γὰρ οὔ;*
MENELAUS: *καὶ σφάγια πρὸ δορὸς καταβάλοις.*
ORESTES: *σὺ δ' ἂν καλῶς;*
MENELAUS: *ἁγνὸς γάρ εἰμι χεῖρας.*
ORESTES: *ἀλλ' οὐ τὰς φρένας.*
MENELAUS: *τίς δ' ἂν προσείποι σ';*
ORESTES: *ὅστις ἐστὶ φιλοπάτωρ.*

MENELAUS: You would be indeed well suited to handle the lustral vessels!
ORESTES: Well, why not?
MENELAUS: …and to perform sacrifice before battle!
ORESTES: And you would be better…
MENELAUS: I am pure (*hagnos*) in respect of my hands!
ORESTES: But not in respect of your mind (*phrenes*).
MENELAUS: But who would speak to you?
ORESTES: Whoever loves his father.

This passage has been singled out as one of the crucial stages in the formation of the idea of purity of mind in Greek religion.[106] Being pure of hands is

[104] On separation of mind and body in Euripides generally, see the discussion of *Hippolytus* in this chapter (pp. 202–13).
[105] We quote the text of the play after Diggle 1994.
[106] See our discussion of Hippolytus in 'Phaedra's Impurity of the Mind' in Ch. 10 (p. 202) with n. 67.

not enough for the successful performance of a religious ritual, and Menelaus, at least in Orestes' view, although he possesses the necessary bodily purity, does not have a pure mind and is thus no better a ritual agent than Orestes. Both ritual actions mentioned in the passage belong to the duties of the leader, who would have to touch the lustral vessels before making sacrifices on behalf of the city, and who would be expected to perform the pre-battle sacrifice as a military leader. Thus, the passage draws attention to the political implications of the miasma of body and mind.

The interconnection of religious correctness and successful leadership is a well-attested and ancient concept. Early Greek epic represents the leader of a community as a bulwark of its safety and prosperity. Good kings guarantee stability, a good relationship with the gods, upright justice, and agricultural abundance;[107] a bad leader represents the opposite of this: his religious offences endanger the whole community.[108] This idea is prominent in tragedy too. A religious offence by a king, and especially his pollution, can have a catastrophic effect on the well-being of the entire community, as Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* demonstrates.[109] In the Classical period, pollution was used as a weapon in the political arena. To mark out a person as polluted was a highly charged accusation, with the aim of discrediting political rivals and undermining their reputation,[110] or even of denying their capability to rule.[111] For instance, this is the way Demosthenes, in a speech *Against Androtion* which he wrote for Diodorus, condemns Androtion as polluted and thus unfit for a public office, highlighting the notion that exceptional purity represents an essential prerequisite for successful political leadership (78):[112]

> *ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ οἶομαι δεῖν τὸν εἰς ἱέρ' εἰσιόντα καὶ χερνίβων καὶ κανῶν ἁψόμενον, καὶ τῆς πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς ἐπιμελείας προστάτην ἐσόμενον οὐχὶ προειρημένον ἡμερῶν ἀριθμὸν ἁγνεύειν, ἀλλὰ τὸν βίον ἡγνευκέναι τοιούτων ἐπιτηδευμάτων οἷα τούτῳ βεβίωται.*
>
> I hold that the man who is to enter the sacred places, to lay hands on the vessels of lustration and the sacrificial baskets, and to become the director of divine worship, ought not to be pure for a prescribed number of days only; his whole life should have been kept pure of the habits that have polluted the life of this man here.[113]

[107] Hom. *Od.* 19.109–14; Hes. *Op*. 225–37.

[108] Hom. *Il.* 1; Hes. *Op.* 238–47.

[109] See Ch. 9, pp. 180–2. On the leader of the community and pollution, Parker 1983: 265–9.

[110] On Aeschines' portrayal of Demosthenes as the 'polluting demon of Greece', Parker 1983: 268–9.

[111] Spartan hostility directed towards the Alcmaeonids, Cleisthenes, and Pericles, as polluted is a well-known example of miasma used as a pretext for wars. See on this Parker 1983: 16–17.

[112] On religious argumentation in this speech, Martin 2009: 127–36.

[113] Greek text from Butcher 1966; tr. Martin 2009: 131.

Demosthenes' entire argumentation is based on the premise that Androtion's pollution and religious offences[114] render him unworthy of a public office. Similarly, by accusing each other of being polluted, Menelaus and Orestes are not merely giving voice to a religious problem; they are using miasma as a weapon in a struggle for power. This altercation between the two is the pinnacle of the tragic plot and represents the moment in which the human characters are entangled in a conflict so vast and hopeless that only a divine intervention can resolve it. To understand why Menelaus perceives Orestes as being ritually unsuitable and why Menelaus' mind is not pure, we must consider the passage in the context of the play.

At the beginning of the tragedy Orestes and Electra are represented as polluted because of the murder of Clytaemestra. The citizens of Argos have decreed that no one may receive the matricides under their roof or at the hearth, nor is anyone allowed to talk to them (vv. 46–8). A trial is pending, and a sentence to death by stoning seems imminent (vv. 48–50).[115] Orestes, as the one who killed Clytaemestra with his own hands, is additionally afflicted with madness. This madness is described as a direct consequence of the matricide, as manifesting itself through panic attacks (*phobos*), and as sent by the Erinyes.[116] Neither Orestes nor Electra has yet been purified. Their only hope is the intervention of Menelaus, who has just arrived at Argos with Helen.

[114] Androtion is accused of prostitution (D. 22.21–3, 29–30, 58), which is one of the reasons why Demosthenes perceives him as polluted; furthermore, he proposed and carried out a decree regarding the objects in Athena's sanctuary: the repair of processional vessels, and the melting-down of the sacred golden crowns and the production of *phialai* from the material. Diodorus accused him of stealing a portion of the gold in the process (D. 22.70–6).

[115] Death by stoning is a type of punishment which involves the entire community and singles out the victim as a target of divine hatred. Padel 1995: 100–3 argues that the mad and the polluted are stoned in Greek myth because both states are perceived as consequences of divine anger.

[116] Orestes' illness (*νόσος*) is madness (*μανία*) and fear (*φόβος*) caused by the spilling of his mother's blood, and is sent by the 'goddesses who should not be named' (vv. 34–9); Orestes knows that his illness is madness (v. 228); Electra identifies the Erinyes as a cause (v. 238); Orestes has temporary moments of clarity, followed by fits of madness (vv. 253–4); he sees the Erinyes (vv. 255–67); Orestes recovers after invoking Apollo (vv. 268–75), and speaks of his affliction as a *νόσος* (v. 282), a punishment for his 'religiously most incorrect deed' *ἔργον ἀνοσιώτατον* (v. 286), and as a panic and derangement of the mind which Electra can help him to overcome (vv. 296–8); Electra agrees that it is panic (vv. 312–13). The chorus perceives the Eumenides as inflicting panic, exacting the penalty for bloodshed (vv. 316–47 and 831–43); Orestes describes his mental affliction to Menelaus (vv. 395–414); Tyndareus perceives Orestes' glance as polluting and Menelaus' conversing with Orestes as dangerous (vv. 479–81 with Willink 1986: 164); Tyndareus sees Orestes' madness as a clear sign that he is hated by the gods (vv. 531–3); in response, Orestes claims that, had he not killed Clytaemestra, his father's Erinyes would have driven him mad (vv. 582–4); on Pylades' arrival, Orestes warns him (v. 793): *εὐλαβοῦ λύσσης μετασχεῖν τῆς ἐμῆς* ('Beware, lest you get infected by my madness'), but Pylades considers it an act of friendship to disregard the danger (vv. 794, 802–3). See Parker 1983: 309 on this passage. On madness as a manifestation of homicide pollution in the form of mental pollution, see 'Madness as Mental Pollution and Murder as a Purification Ritual' in Ch. 8 (pp. 140–5). On madness in tragedy, Padel 1995.

Menelaus, unlike the siblings, has not committed any crime; nevertheless, Orestes perceives his mind as being polluted. The likeliest reason for this claim is that Menelaus has twice rejected Orestes' supplication. In the first instance of supplication (vv. 380–469), Orestes throws himself at Menelaus' feet as soon as he sees him, clearly declaring himself to be a suppliant, and begs for salvation (vv. 382–4). He explains that he is pursued by the Erinyes 'with madness as revenge for his mother's blood' (v. 400); that it was Apollo who ordered the matricide (v. 416); that the city has turned against him (v. 428) so that no one will purify him (v. 430); that, on that very day, a vote will be cast deciding whether to stone him (vv. 440–2); and that he cannot run away (vv. 444–6). Tyndareus, his maternal grandfather, arrives and interrupts the supplication, blaming Orestes for not turning to the law-courts to demand justice; his speech (vv. 479–81 and 492–541) condemns retaliatory kin-killings and characterizes Orestes as 'clearly hated by the gods' (v. 531). Especially significant in this context is Tyndareus' condemnation of Orestes as a son who ignored his mother's supplication when she bared her breast (vv. 526–9). Tyndareus concludes his speech by urging Menelaus not to help Orestes, because that would be 'contrary to the will of the gods' (vv. 534–5).

The ritual of supplication is a linchpin of this tragedy:[117] supplication of Menelaus is Orestes' only hope; Orestes himself, however, had previously rejected his mother's supplication and killed her. Is Orestes even in a position to demand supplication? According to Tyndareus he is not, because the gods hate him and because he refused his mother's supplication.[118] Orestes defends himself by explaining his precarious position of being, on the one hand, *anosios*, because he has killed his mother, but, on the other hand, *hosios*, because he has avenged his father (vv. 546–7);[119] he also claims that supplication is wrong for an adulteress in every situation (vv. 566–71). Finally, in a striking turn, Orestes blames Apollo who, through his oracle, had ordered him to kill Clytaemestra, claiming that it is the god who should be perceived as *anosios* and be killed (vv. 591–6, esp. vv. 595–6: *ἐκεῖνον ἡγεῖσθ' ἀνόσιον καὶ κτείνετε· / ἐκεῖνος ἥμαρτ', οὐκ ἐγώ*). He concludes (vv. 597–8): *ἦ οὐκ ἀξιόχρεως ὁ θεὸς ἀναφέροντί μοι / μίασμα λῦσαι*; ('Is it not the god's obligation, since he brought this miasma upon me, to release me from it?'). Remarkably, Orestes is right, because this is precisely the role Apollo plays at the end of this tragedy. In addition, at the start of the play Orestes is represented as being in the

[117] Burnett 1971: 183–8 argues that in the *Orestes* Euripides invokes the conventions of a suppliant drama in order to overturn them: Orestes has failed as a suppliant, Menelaus has failed twice over as a rescuer. Burnett discusses supplication as a structural model of the tragedy, but not the individual supplication acts and their consequences.

[118] The motif of Clytaemestra's rejected supplication is repeated in the choral ode, in which the origins of Orestes' madness are traced back to the moment when she showed her breast to him and he nevertheless killed her (vv. 831–43).

[119] See also vv. 562–3.

grip of mad delirium, but he seems to pull himself together and get better every time he mentions Apollo (vv. 268–75 and 591–6). Tyndareus, however, is not at all persuaded by Orestes' arguments. On the contrary, he again announces that defending Orestes would be in opposition to the gods (v. 624), and that Menelaus should allow him to be sentenced to death by stoning (vv. 625–6).

After Tyndareus leaves, Orestes begs Menelaus for help for the second time, reminding him of how Agamemnon had indebted him by assisting him in the war waged to retrieve Helen and by killing his own daughter (vv. 640–68), and supplicates Menelaus again (vv. 671–9). The chorus, too, implores Menelaus to help Orestes (vv. 680–1). Menelaus, however, prevaricates, claiming that he has no allies and only a small army (vv. 682–716).[120] Apparently, Menelaus evades Orestes because he is interested in profiting from the power-struggle at Argos, and his true motivation is to seize control of the city.[121] As long as Orestes is prevented from taking up the leadership, either because he is in exile or because he is polluted and barred from communal life, the Argive throne has no heir and Menelaus can claim it.

The Argive assembly decides that Electra and Orestes must kill themselves. Orestes is especially bitter, since Menelaus did not attend the assembly, even though he had promised to help Orestes 'with wisdom, if not with might' (v. 710), and because he suspects that his uncle wishes to rule the city (vv. 1058–9). Pylades, who meanwhile has come to aid Orestes, proposes that they should take revenge on Menelaus by killing Helen (v. 1105). Electra suggests that if they kill Helen and then seize Hermione as a hostage and threaten to kill her too, Menelaus might be compelled to allow them to escape (vv. 1177–204).[122] The plan is accepted and swiftly executed: as reported by the Phrygian slave who fled in panic, Orestes and Pylades entered the house and pretended to supplicate Helen, who was already sitting on a throne (vv. 1408–15). They seized her, but when Orestes was on the point of killing her they were distracted by the entrance of Hermione. Electra used the pretence of supplication to lure Hermione into the house: she explained that the cries Hermione heard from inside were Orestes and Pylades supplicating

[120] For analysis of this speech, Porter 1994: 71–2. Porter concludes (p. 71) that Menelaus' numerous *gnomai*, his use of simile and metaphor, the heavy larding with abstracts, and the outright lies 'mark it as a speech of a cowardly but clever villain'.

[121] In the course of the initial supplication Menelaus exhibits a keen interest in the whereabouts of Agamemnon's sceptre (v. 437). As the scholiast to lines 356–9 remarks, Menelaus addresses the Argive palace in the same manner as Agamemnon did (A. *Ag*. 810f.), but this is not his home. On the hints that Menelaus is attempting to usurp the throne, Burnett 1971: 186 and Hartigan 1991: 136.

[122] Hartigan 1991: 146–7 sees the protagonists' swift transition from passivity to frenzied activity as a sign that Orestes' madness has infected Electra and Pylades, which is why they act in a violent and bloodthirsty manner; Vellacott 1975: 71–2 argues that the chorus is infected as well. There is, however, no indication in the text that the chorus, Electra, or Pylades are in any way infected, as Porter 1994: 311–13 persuasively demonstrates.

Helen (vv. 1332–4), and that Hermione should join them in supplicating her mother so that she might take pity on Agamemnon's children (vv. 1336–43).

Hermione's entry caused a distraction, and Helen vanished in the tumult. Orestes seized his cousin, however, and when Menelaus appeared, he threatened to kill her unless Menelaus allowed them all to escape. Menelaus and Orestes face each other, neither willing to give up, each accusing the other of crimes against family members, of unsuitability to rule, and of ritual impurity. At that moment Apollo appears, and resolves the conflict by announcing that Helen is to become a goddess and that Orestes must suffer a year-long exile and subsequent prosecution for matricide by the Eumenides at the Areopagus, for which he will be acquitted by divine judges. He is to return to Argos as a king and marry Hermione. Electra will marry Pylades, and Menelaus will return to Sparta (vv. 1625–64). Finally, Apollo himself will restore Orestes' standing in the eyes of his citizens, as it was he who had compelled him to commit a matricide (vv. 1664–5).

Pollution plays a significant role in this drama and, as is often the case in tragedies, different characters represent different attitudes towards this force. Euripides' innovation is that his main character, Orestes, also expresses different, opposing views of his own crime and pollution. Orestes perceives himself as being polluted,[123] and he goes a long way towards acknowledging that his Erinyes are an affliction caused by his guilty conscience.[124] When Menelaus asks him: 'What sickness destroyed you?', Orestes replies (v. 396): *ἡ σύνεσις, ὅτι σύνοιδα δεῖν' εἰργασμένος* ('Knowledge, because I know I did a terrible thing'). This line became famous in antiquity and was quoted many times.[125] Like Aeschylus' Orestes, Euripides' is aware that he is deranged,[126] and both see Erinyes when no one else does. Aeschylus, however, provides a visible spectacle of the Erinyes in the third part of the trilogy, whereas in Euripides' play they remain in Orestes' mind. Euripides' hero also frequently voices his remorse (vv. 285–93, 396–8, 1668–9), and describes his action as a 'religiously most incorrect deed', *ἔργον ἀνοσιώτατον* (v. 286).

Aeschylus represents Orestes' madness as a direct and automatic consequence of spilling kindred blood, but by allowing the Erinyes to appear on stage in the *Eumenides* he presents them as externalized agents of pollution. Euripides' Orestes is fully aware that his Erinyes are a miasma, which is manifested as a mental disease in consequence of kin-killing. By expressing remorse and by identifying his illness in verse 396 as the knowledge that he

[123] Orestes supplicates Menelaus and describes his mental affliction as a direct consequence of matricide (vv. 392–400), and Menelaus acknowledges the need for Orestes' purification in v. 429.

[124] Parker 1983: 254.

[125] See Willink 1986: 150–1 for attestations and a discussion. Hartigan 1991: 136 and n. 30 provides a brief overview of scholarship on the line. Porter 1994: 298–313 provides a detailed summary of scholarly discussions.

[126] A. *Ch.* 1021–8.

did a terrible thing, however, he represents miasma as a condition of his inner consciousness (*synesis*). Dodds famously argued that such statements represent a transition from shame-culture to guilt-culture:[127] in his view, the condition of miasma, which in shame-culture 'belongs to the world of external events and operates with the same ruthless indifference to motive as a typhoid germ',[128] starts to resemble something more similar to the Christian notion of sin, a reflection of the inner consciousness, only late and uncertainly in the Hellenic world. According to Dodds, the transference of the notion of purity to the moral sphere was 'a…late development: not until the closing years of the fifth century do we encounter explicit statements that clean hands are not enough—the heart must be clean also'.[129]

In our view, far from appearing for the first time in the late fifth century, the notion of inner purity and pollution is attested already in Hesiod—it is only the mode of its representation that changes in the later period. Euripides puts into clear words what is already implied in Aeschylus. The Erinyes in the *Oresteia* also target Orestes' mind: they too are a consequence of a terrible act, and they can only be dispelled once the victim is exonerated. In the *Eumenides* the vengeful Erinyes are externalized but their effect is the same as in *Orestes*: illness and mental derangement.

By representing an Orestes who is tortured by self-doubt and remorse, Euripides draws the audiences' attention to the perpetrator's feelings and inner torment. This is not to say that Aeschylus' hero does not feel guilty and tormented. Aeschylus' immediate focus is the way other humans and the gods react to the act of kin-killing and the subsequent miasma, whereas Euripides is additionally interested in the perpetrator's own view of himself: Aeschylus represents different and conflicting views of Orestes' deed, whereas Euripides represents a hero who has different and conflicting views of his own deed.[130] This is also the reason why Euripides' Orestes is represented as, in his own words, *hosios* and *anosios* at the same time (vv. 546–7). Euripides' Orestes even voices two different views regarding Agamemnon's expectations of him as an avenger—on the one hand, he says that his father would supplicate him, demanding that Orestes does *not* commit the matricide, since this would not bring Agamemnon back to life and would cause countless woes for Orestes (vv. 287–93); on the other hand, Orestes also says that had he not killed Clytaemestra, his father's Erinyes would have tormented him with madness (vv. 579–82). This contradiction can only be resolved if we imagine the agency of the Erinyes as separate from the person they are

[127] Dodds 1951: 36–7. [128] Dodds 1951: 36.

[129] Dodds 1951: 37 with n. 47, and 55–6, and 'History of Scholarship' in the Introduction chapter (pp. 19–20).

[130] Porter 1994: 308 rightly stresses the fact that Euripides' Orestes 'offers a variety of perspectives on his deed', which reflects 'not a division in the protagonist's mind, but the multiple aspects of Orestes' plight which the poet wishes to highlight'.

avenging, able to act contrary to the wishes of the victim. Contradictory statements such as these contribute to the creation of a discourse which separates and distinguishes between the various strands and types of motivation for a crime and the various forces which are activated as the outcome of a crime. Miasma, as one of the essential consequences of blood-spilling, is subject to a similar analysis: it is brought on by the Erinyes in the form of a mental illness, but the same illness is also described by Orestes as a consequence of the emotional pain and remorse of the killer, acting independently of the Erinyes, yet having the same effect. Orestes supplicates Menelaus, asking for the purification of blood with blood, but what really helps him overcome the debilitating symptoms of the illness is the advent of Pylades, who professes his will to share Orestes' emotional burden.[131] Even though Orestes warns him that he might be infected by his madness, Pylades refuses to leave, and remains by his side (vv. 790–4).

Orestes also repeatedly doubts Apollo and questions the moral correctness of the god's order. Even at the end of the play, as Apollo appears and resolves the situation, Orestes remarks that he only now sees that the god is truthful and not a false prophet (v. 1667, *ψευδόμαντις*), and admits that he was worried that he did not hear the words of a god but of some avenging spirit.[132]

Euripides' Orestes is keenly aware of the difference between outward appearances and true intentions,[133] a difference that he brings to the fore in accusing Menelaus of having a miasma of the mind. In his altercation with Menelaus (vv. 1602–5), however, Orestes, even though he had previously acknowledged that he is polluted, now startlingly professes his fitness for handling ritual vessels. Bearing in mind Orestes' inner torment and conflict, perhaps we should understand verses 1602–5 not so much as an expression of Orestes' confidence in his absolute ritual correctness, but rather as a relative statement, in the sense that Orestes asserts that he is not ritually pure but that he is still more ritually correct than Menelaus, since he is at least aware of his impurity, whereas Menelaus, having an impure mind, does not demonstrate any remorse or self-doubt, which ultimately renders him less ritually correct than Orestes.

Besides representing Orestes' own conflicting views of his deed and of the nature of his pollution, Euripides also offers other characters' views of his miasma. Orestes is completely renounced by his grandfather Tyndareus,

[131] In v. 735 Pylades says that 'friends share everything'.

[132] vv. 1668–9: *καίτοι μ' ἐσῄει δεῖμα, μή τινος κλύων / ἀλαστόρων δόξαιμι σὴν κλύειν ὄπα.*

[133] Having heard Electra's condemnation of the daughters of Tyndareus, Orestes tells her (vv. 251–2): *σύ νυν διάφερε τῶν κακῶν, ἔξεστι γάρ, / καὶ μὴ μόνον λέγ' ἀλλὰ καὶ φρόνει τάδε* ('You should take care to distinguish yourself from the wicked, since you are capable of it: don't just say, but also think these things').

who raised him. Tyndareus does not even address him directly at first: he sees him as a matricidal snake, as *anosios*, and as potentially polluting (vv. 479–81). In his opinion, as a man clearly hated by the gods Orestes is punished by madness and should be eliminated (vv. 531–3). After Orestes' plea, Tyndareus does address him but only to condemn him, now together with his sister (vv. 607–29).

Helen does not say anything explicitly about Orestes' pollution, but she emphatically denies the possibility of being polluted by talking to Electra, since, as she claims, she blames Apollo for the *hamartia* of Clytaemestra's murder (vv. 75–6). This implies that, in her eyes, Orestes is not emanating pollution either.

The male citizens of Argos wish to eliminate both Orestes and Electra, since, as sources of dangerous miasma, they are a threat to the community.

The view of the chorus of Argive women is ambivalent and reflects Orestes' own inner conflict and ambivalence. On the whole, they appear sympathetic to Orestes and Electra. In the first part of the play they blame the gods (vv. 160–1), even asserting that the matricide was just;[134] they entreat the Eumenides to stop tormenting Orestes, and they express genuine pity and commiseration (vv. 316–47). In the final part of the play they wholeheartedly support Pylades' and Electra's murderous plans, and they even assist the perpetrators by keeping a watch and urging them on.[135] All the more surprising is the view which the women express in the third choral ode, which mentions no divine support for the matricide but only the hubristic crimes of Tantalus and his descendants (vv. 807–18),[136] which resulted in a matricide, now portrayed from the human perspective and focusing on Clytaemestra's point of view (vv. 819–30):

τὸ καλὸν οὐ καλόν, τοκέων
πυριγενεῖ τεμεῖν παλάμᾳ (820)
χρόα, μελάνδετον δὲ φόνῳ
ξίφος ἐς αὐγὰς ἀελίοιο δεῖξαι·
τὸ δ' εὖ κακουργεῖν ἀσέβεια ποικίλα
κακοφρόνων τ' ἀνδρῶν παράνοι-
α. θανάτου γὰρ ἀμφὶ φόβῳ (825)
Τυνδαρὶς ἰάχησε τάλαι-
να· Τέκνον, οὐ τολμᾷς ὅσια
κτείνων σὰν ματέρα· μὴ πατρῴ-
αν τιμῶν χάριν ἐξανά-
ψῃ δύσκλειαν ἐς αἰεί. (830)

[134] v. 193: δίκᾳ μέν, to which Electra replies: καλῶς δ' οὔ.

[135] Keeping watch: vv. 1258–60, 1264–5; urging the murder of Helen: vv. 1303–10; the murder is described as just retribution: vv. 1352–65.

[136] On ancestral fault in the *Orestes*, Gagné 2013: 425–38.

> That 'good' is not good, to slice
> parents' flesh with fireborn handiwork
> and to display the sword
> dark-laced with killing to the light of the sun.
> Virtuous crime is sin sophistical,
> wrong-headed men's delusion.
> For pierced by fear of death,
> Tyndareos' poor daughter shrieked:
> 'My child, you are braving no lawful venture,
> killing your mother! Do not,
> in seeking to honour your father's sake
> tie infamy to yourself for evermore.'[137]

Without divine involvement or motivation in the picture, all we are left with is a dreadful, religiously incorrect (*οὐ ὅσια*) kin-murder, the horrific polluted weapon exposed to the sun,[138] and the 'manifold impiety of evil-doing' (*κακουργεῖν ἀσέβεια ποικίλα*) whose source is the derangement (*παράνοια*) of evil-minded men (*κακοφρόνων τ' ἀνδρῶν*). The sentiment of the third choral ode is thus in stark contrast to all other utterances of the chorus.[139] Without Apollo's order, Orestes' matricide would have been not only the most horrific crime, but also an act of impiety. The mind of the perpetrator (*κακοφρόνων*) is represented as the source and origin of this impiety (*ἀσέβεια*). This is, however, but one—flawed—view of the deed, for, at the end of the play we will be confirmed in our knowledge that the matricide was the result of a divine will and that it was committed at Apollo's command. The conflicting and ambivalent views of the chorus mirror Orestes' own inner torment, and guide the audiences in assessing the matricide from two different perspectives: as a divinely sanctioned act versus a crime against nature; as the act of a pious man versus the crime of a deranged sinner.

Finally, Menelaus does not seem the least bit alarmed by fear of Orestes' contagious pollution, but he does not offer to purify him either, and refuses his supplication twice. Menelaus' attitude towards Orestes' pollution is cynical and calculating: for him, Orestes *is* polluted when it comes to assessing his ability to rule, and yet he does not offer any help to his nephew as a polluted suppliant. As a man of significant power and his close relative, Menelaus is in a perfect position to purify his brother's son.[140]

In the final altercation between Orestes and Menelaus, neither can claim purity. Orestes is polluted as a matricide, and cannot simply seize power

[137] Translation: West 1987. The text is riddled with problems and the interpretation is controversial, see Willink 1986: 217–21 and Porter 1994: 314–26.

[138] West 1987: 240 adduces parallels from Hesiod, *Op.* 727 and other texts which demonstrate the need for disgraceful and polluting things to be kept away from the sun.

[139] See on this Porter 1994: 322–6.

[140] On high social standing as a desideratum for a purifier, Parker 1983: 374.

before being purified by exile and a trial. This much is clear. However, is Orestes correct in assuming that Menelaus—whom he also refers to as *anosios* (v. 1213)—is also polluted because he refused to help a suppliant, led astray by his desire for power?

It is certainly paradoxical that Orestes, polluted by the mental affliction of madness, calls Menelaus 'polluted in mind'. Whereas Orestes' pollution is perceived as a given by all characters in the play (save perhaps Helen), Menelaus is called 'polluted' by Orestes only. However, the startling verse 1604 certainly challenges an assessment of Menelaus' moral character. In the course of the play Menelaus comes across as a calculating villain; Aristotle, for example, famously condemned the play precisely because Euripides represented Menelaus as having an excessive 'baseness of character'.[141] After Menelaus fails to acknowledge Orestes as a suppliant and simply walks away, Orestes unambiguously labels him a villain (v. 718, *ὦ κάκιστε*). Menelaus' transgression in his ritual role as *supplicandus* is that he refused to evaluate Orestes' request—instead of either accepting or rejecting Orestes' supplication in explicit terms, Menelaus breaches the rules of the ritual by walking away.[142] From Orestes' perspective, Menelaus clearly had ulterior motives—he refused the supplication because he hoped to seize power in Argos. Menelaus renounced his role as a ritual agent because he was motivated by a desire for personal gain, which is why he can be perceived as being impure in mind.

Orestes was the most popular of all tragedies, not only of Euripides' works, and it was performed often after Euripides' death.[143] This popularity is surprising, perhaps, considering Aristotle's condemnation of the representation of Menelaus and the comment preserved in the *hypothesis* (ll. 39–40): 'The drama belongs amongst the most popular productions, but with regard to the characters, it is the worst: all except Pylades are bad (*φαῦλοι*).' This statement is hard to deny. All of the main characters are associated with some kind of pollution. Electra, Orestes, and Pylades[144] are polluted by murder; Menelaus, at least according to Orestes, has a polluted mind. Even Helen is described as the agent of pollution.[145] Orestes, however, is singular among them, insofar as he is the only character who reflects on the significance of the mind as the ritual agent. He identifies his own religiously incorrect state as a miasma of the mind, since he describes it as an illness resulting from his

[141] Arist. *Po.* 1454a28–9. Aristotle's main objection is that Menelaus' baseness of character was not required for the story (*ἔστιν δὲ παράδειγμα πονηρίας μὲν ἤθους μὴ ἀναγκαίας οἷον ὁ Μενέλαος ὁ ἐν τῷ Ὀρέστῃ*); see also 1461b 19–21. Porter 1994: 3 argues that the negative view of Menelaus, as represented in the scholia to the play is a reflection of Aristotle's views.

[142] As argued by Naiden 2006: 106–7.

[143] West 1987: 28.

[144] Pylades was exiled by his father because of his pollution (v. 767): *ὅτι συνηράμην φόνον σοι μητρός, ἀνόσιον λέγων*.

[145] vv. 1387–9: the Phrygian eunuch calls Helen 'the Erinys of Troy' and Orestes 'the defiler of Greece' (v. 1584: *τὴν Ἑλλάδος μιάστορ'*).

knowledge that he did a bad thing (v. 396). Orestes also accuses Menelaus of having a guilty conscience (impurity of his *phrenes*), since his refusal to help a suppliant had ulterior motives. If all of the characters in the play are φαῦλοι, Orestes—the mad one—is the only one who reflects on his own moral badness and that of others. With regard to rituals, too, all of the main characters—including Pylades—commit transgressions: Helen refuses to perform the funerary rituals for her dead sister and sends her daughter instead; Menelaus rejects a suppliant; Orestes and Pylades use supplication as a pretence to approach Helen and kill her;[146] Electra lures Hermione into the house by urging her to perform a supplication. Thus, by representing a set of ritually impure characters in the *Orestes*, Euripides again brings a debate about the mind as a ritual agent into the public arena. Bad intentions jeopardize the performance of rituals and pollute the mind, just as criminal and religiously incorrect deeds do.

ELECTRA, PERFORMED (THE DATE IS DISPUTED) IN 413, 420, OR 419 BC

Summary: We focus on the central motif of religious correctness (τὸ ὅσιον) and discuss the representations of Electra, the willing perpetrator of the matricide, and of Orestes, who hesitates and perceives the act as dreadful. Once Electra repents, the chorus comments (vv. 1203–4) on her thinking religiously correct thoughts (*phronein hosia*): φρονεῖς γὰρ ὅσια νῦν τότ' οὐ / φρονοῦσα, bringing the issue of her motivation to the fore. At the end of the play the Dioscuri act as *dei ex machina* and announce that the gods pay special attention to the mind and inner disposition of the worshippers (vv. 1350–6). They do not assist the polluted (μυσαροί), and they help those who cherish religious correctness (τὸ ὅσιον) and justice (τὸ δίκαιον). By juxtaposing pollution with moral goodness, Euripides asserts that it is the state of the worshipper's mind (*phren*) that matters most to the gods, and that moral purity serves as a criterion for the gods when they decide whether they should intervene on mortals' behalf.

Euripides' *Electra*[147] is based on the well-known story about the vengeance of Agamemnon's children—the divinely ordained murder of Aegisthus and Clytaemestra. Euripides famously features an Electra who inhabits a modest cottage and is married to a poor, but nobly minded, farmer. Orestes' homecoming and the siblings' ensuing recognition of one another sets the scene for a series of probing observations on the impossibility of knowing one's

[146] Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 392 remarks: 'This corrupt use of supplication in the plot to murder Helen is a perversion of a ritual comparable to that in *Electra*, where Orestes had chosen to kill Aigisthos during the performance of a sacrifice.'

[147] On the date, Cropp 1988: l–li.

true character on the basis of appearances, origin, or wealth.[148] This dominant theme is used as a foil in order to depict the abyss between divine and human perception: the human characters are self-deceiving and deceived by others, they cannot really know each other's true nature or even their own, whereas the gods have the ability to perceive the true nature of humans. To this traditional notion Euripides adds a startling corollary: since the gods know humans well, they distinguish between the *μυσαροί* (the polluted) on the one hand, and those who are *hosioi* (religiously correct) and *dikaioi* (just), on the other. The term *hosios* ('religiously correct') plays a pivotal role in the play. As the plot develops, we follow the transition of the characters and of the city of Argos from the state of *anosion* to *hosion*.

At the beginning of the play the farmer explains how he came to be married to the princess Electra: instead of allowing her husband to kill Electra, Clytaemestra consented to have her married to a man whose children would present no threat to the royal couple (vv. 25–42). The farmer, inhibited by his sense of honour and respect for Electra and her absent brother, Orestes, did not consummate the marriage (vv. 43–9). He ends his speech with a startling statement, which encapsulates the tenor of the play (vv. 50–3): 'Whoever says that I am a fool… should know that he, in applying false standards for judging sound-mindedness, is a fool himself.'[149] The farmer is the only morally unambiguous character in this tragedy: he is pious (*εὐσεβής*, vv. 253–5), he avoids hubris (v. 257), and he is naturally sound-minded (v. 261, *σώφρων ἔφυ*).

Aegisthus and Clytaemestra are depicted as traditional villains by the other characters: he, in Electra's words, has murderous and polluted hands (v. 322, *μιαιφόνοισι χερσί*); the chorus describes her as evil-minded (v. 481, *κακόφρον*). Clytaemestra's marriage is qualified as *ἀνόσιος* by Orestes (v. 600, *ἀνοσίων γάμων*),[150] and, as Agamemnon's tutor states, the people of the city hate her as an *ἀνόσιος* woman (v. 645, *μισεῖται γὰρ ἀνόσιος γυνή*). Orestes addresses his dead father, who is 'in a religiously incorrect manner (*ἀνοσίως*) made to dwell under the ground',[151] and invokes him as an ally against the couple, whom he describes as 'religiously incorrect diffusers of miasma' (v. 683, *ἀνοσίους μιάστορας*). At the same time, however, both Aegisthus and Clytaemestra are described and presented as pious performers of ritual activities. The messenger who relates Aegisthus' murder provides, for example, a long and detailed depiction of Aegisthus' sacrifice of the bullock to the Nymphs (vv. 774–843). Aegisthus even invites the strangers to participate

[148] On the motif of deception and self-deception in this play, Hartigan 1991: 107–26. On the discrepancy between outward appearance and inner disposition in the play, Goldhill 1986: 162–5, 228–9, 256–9.

[149] We quote the text after Diggle 1981: *ὅστις δέ μ' εἶναί φησι μῶρον…/ γνώμης πονηροῖς κανόσιν ἀναμετρούμενος / τὸ σῶφρον ἴστω καὐτὸς αὖ τοιοῦτος ὤν.*

[150] On the theme of distorted marriage in this play, Zeitlin 1970.

[151] v. 677: *σύ τ' ὦ κάτω γῆς ἀνοσίως οἰκῶν πάτερ.*

in the ritual, unaware that they are Orestes and Pylades who have arrived to murder him, and he pays special attention to the preliminary purification of his hands (vv. 791–4). Orestes kills him from behind, after the ritual slaughter of the animal, while Aegisthus is inspecting the entrails (vv. 838–43).[152]

When Aegisthus' body is brought to Electra, she launches into a long and hate-filled tirade, and characterizes Aegisthus as a 'godless husband'[153] living in an *ἀνόσιος* marriage.[154] However, in her blind hatred for the couple it is Electra who proves herself to be *ἀνόσιος*. Whereas Orestes is reluctant and has second thoughts about the terrible crime of matricide (vv. 967, 969, 977, 985–7), even doubting the oracle, Electra spurs him on most resolutely (vv. 975–87):

ORESTES: *μητροκτόνος νῦν φεύξομαι, τόθ' ἁγνὸς ὤν.* (975)
ELECTRA: *καὶ μή γ' ἀμύνων πατρὶ δυσσεβὴς ἔσῃ.*
ORESTES: *ἐγῶιδα· μητρὸς δ' οὐ φόνου δώσω δίκας;*
ELECTRA: *τί δ' ἦν πατρῴαν διαμεθῇς τιμωρίαν;*
ORESTES: *ἆρ' αὖτ' ἀλάστωρ εἶπ' ἀπεικασθεὶς θεῷ;*
ELECTRA: *ἱερὸν καθίζων τρίποδ'; ἐγὼ μὲν οὐ δοκῶ.* (980)
ORESTES: *οὔ τἂν πιθοίμην εὖ μεμαντεῦσθαι τάδε.*
ELECTRA: *οὐ μὴ κακισθεὶς εἰς ἀνανδρίαν πεσῇ,*
ἀλλ' εἶ τὸν αὐτὸν τῇδ' ὑποστήσων δόλον
ᾧ καὶ πόσιν καθεῖλεν †Αἴγισθον κτανών†;
ORESTES: *ἔσειμι· δεινοῦ δ' ἄρχομαι προβήματος,* (985)
καὶ δεινὰ δράσω γ'. εἰ θεοῖς δοκεῖ τάδε,
ἔστω· πικρὸν δ' οὐχ ἡδὺ τἀγώνισμά μοι.

ORESTES: Formerly free of stain, I shall be expelled as a matricide.
ELECTRA: And if you do not avenge your father, you shall be impious.
ORESTES: I know—but will I not pay a penalty for killing my mother?
ELECTRA: But what if you abandon the vengeance of your father?
ORESTES: And what if these things were ordained by an avenging spirit who only resembles a god?
ELECTRA: Sitting on a holy tripod? I don't think so.
ORESTES: I cannot believe that this oracle is good.
ELECTRA: Don't be a coward and unmanly, but use the same trick on her as you used to kill her husband Aegisthus.
ORESTES: I will go inside. I make a terrible step and will do a terrible thing. If the gods will this, so shall it be. This contest is not sweet, but bitter for me.

Whereas Orestes displays doubt and hesitation, Electra has no qualms about the matricide. The pretext for luring Clytaemestra into the house is Electra's

[152] It has long been noted that the demise of Aegisthus is represented as a sacrifice corrupted by murder. For a discussion of the scene, Easterling 1988: 101–8; Cropp 1988: 153–7; Henrichs 1994/5: 86; Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 346.

[153] v. 927: *ἄνδρα δυσσεβῆ.* [154] v. 926: *ἀνόσιον γήμας γάμον.*

plea for help to perform a customary tenth-day sacrifice after the alleged birth of her child (vv. 1124–31).[155] Clytaemestra appears and converses with her daughter quite calmly and reasonably, without displaying any of the violence or bloodthirstiness of her Aeschylean counterpart. She agrees to help Electra and enters the house, where Orestes and Electra jointly slaughter her. As she cries in agony, the chorus pities her but also asserts that she has done *ἀνόσια* deeds to Agamemnon.[156] As Electra and Orestes exit the house, they relate their murder: Orestes invokes the Earth and Zeus to 'look upon the murderous, polluted deeds',[157] and reproaches Apollo's oracle, wondering what godly man shall look upon him, the murderer of his own mother (vv. 1190–7); Electra now finally accepts the blame for the crime (vv. 1182–4) and wonders who would marry a woman like herself (vv. 1198–200). The chorus comments (vv. 1201–5):

> *πάλιν πάλιν φρόνημα σὸν*
> *μετεστάθη πρὸς αὔραν·*
> *φρονεῖς γὰρ ὅσια νῦν, τότ᾽ οὐ*
> *φρονοῦσα, δεινὰ δ᾽ εἰργάσω,*
> *φίλα, κασίγνητον οὐ θέλοντα.*
>
> Again, again your mind changes as the wind blows: now you think religiously correct thoughts, but previously you did not, and you have done a terrible thing, my friend, to your brother, who was unwilling.

Electra not only incited her brother to kill Clytaemestra, she also charged him with impiety (v. 976, *δυσσεβὴς ἔσῃ*) and of cowardly, unmanly behavior (v. 982), due to his hesitation. When Clytaemestra entered her home, Electra went as far as to characterize the act of matricide as a sacrifice (v. 1141): *θύσεις γὰρ οἷα χρή σε δαίμοσιν θύη* ('You will make a sacrifice which is right to be made to the gods'). Orestes and Electra describe the events in the house: Clytaemestra exposed her breast (v. 1207), pleading and supplicating her children (vv. 1214–17), and while Orestes, overcome by pity and dread, veiled his head as he thrust the knife (vv. 1221–3), Electra urged him on and directed the blow by putting her hand to the sword (vv. 1224–6). The difference between the attitudes of Electra and her brother to the act of matricide is clear: she showed no hesitation, she saw the act as pious and necessary, and she guided the final blow, even though it was Orestes, and not Electra, who was ordained by the oracle to commit the deed.[158] Orestes, despite his divine instructions, hesitates and perceives the command as being dreadful.

[155] On this ritual, Zeitlin 1970: 652.

[156] vv. 1168–71: *ᾤωξα κἀγὼ πρὸς τέκνων χειρουμένης. / νέμει τοι δίκαν θεός, ὅταν τύχῃ· / σχέτλια μὲν ἔπαθες, ἀνόσια δ᾽ εἰργάσω, / τάλαιν᾽, εὐνέταν.*

[157] vv. 1178–9: *ἴδετε τάδ᾽ ἔργα φόνι- /α μυσαρά.*

[158] This is clear from Electra's remark in vv. 1303–4.

Both siblings are matricides, but the chorus only singles out Electra as 'thinking religiously incorrect thoughts'. It is evident that, according to the chorus, it is her mental disposition, her willingness to commit the deed, that matters. Electra was quick to judge everyone but herself, and it is only in the moment when she shows remorse and blames herself that she begins to think *ὅσια*.

At the end of the play, Castor and Pollux appear and announce the outcome of the situation. Their verdict corresponds with Orestes' attitude, as Castor tells him (vv. 1244–6):

> *δίκαια μέν νυν ἥδ' ἔχει, σὺ δ' οὐχὶ δρᾷς.*
> *Φοῖβος δέ, Φοῖβος—ἀλλ' ἄναξ γάρ ἐστ' ἐμός,*
> *σιγῶ· σοφὸς δ' ὢν οὐκ ἔχρησέ σοι σοφά.*

She received justice, but you did not act justly. And Apollo, Apollo—however, he is my king, so I shall keep quiet—but he, being wise, did not prophesize a wise thing to you.

Like Orestes himself, Castor blames the oracle and condemns the deed, but, somewhat paradoxically, he announces that he does not perceive the siblings to be polluted by murder (v. 1294), since he ascribes the murderous act to Apollo.[159] Nevertheless, as matricides the siblings must leave Argos for good; if Orestes were to attempt to stay, the Erinyes would drive him mad (vv. 1250–3). Castor announces that Orestes must stand trial at Athens, which will appease the Erinyes, and that he will then experience happiness and prosperity in Arcadia, where he will found a new city (vv. 1273–91). Electra is to leave Argos and marry Pylades, who will also see to it that the pious farmer is richly rewarded and established in Phocis (vv. 1284–9).

Castor also discloses that the suffering of the whole family was the result of divine will, and that the one person whom they did unanimously blame for their manifold misfortunes was not guilty at all. In a decisive testimony to the fragility of human knowledge, Castor reveals that, contrary to everyone's conviction, Helen did not go to Troy. It was Zeus who sent an image of Helen there, in order to 'cause strife and slaughter of mortals'.[160] Instead of despondency and hopelessness, however, the god's closing remarks anticipate future happiness, not only for the unfortunate children of Agamemnon, but for the Athenian audience of the play as well.

Castor declares that there is a city where religious correctness and justice abide, with an ancient court established by the gods where Orestes will be acquitted and where 'the votes are cast in the most pious and incorruptible

[159] vv. 1296–7: *Φοίβῳ τήνδ' ἀναθήσω / πρᾶξιν φονίαν*. On Castor's comments about Apollo, Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 348–9.

[160] vv. 1282–3: *Ζεὺς δ', ὡς ἔρις γένοιτο καὶ φόνος βροτῶν, / εἴδωλον Ἑλένης ἐξέπεμψ' ἐς Ἴλιον*.

manner'.[161] This religiously correct city is Athens, the city of Pallas (vv. 1319–20, *ὁσίαν … Παλλάδος … πόλιν*).[162]

The second comforting thought is expressed in the closing section of the play: the gods care for mortals. Castor announces that he and other divinities do feel compassion for human struggles,[163] which is why they offer their help. When gods do decide to intervene on behalf of mortals, however, they distinguish between the polluted and the inwardly pure. Castor says (vv. 1350–6):

τοῖς μὲν μυσαροῖς οὐκ ἐπαρήγομεν (1350)
οἶσιν δ' ὅσιον καὶ τὸ δίκαιον
φίλον ἐν βιότῳ, τούτους χαλεπῶν
ἐκλύοντες μόχθων σῴζομεν.
οὕτως ἀδικεῖν μηδεὶς θελέτω
μηδ' ἐπιόρκων μέτα συμπλείτω· (1355)
θεὸς ὢν θνητοῖς ἀγορεύω.

We do not come to aid the polluted, but we save and release from hard distress those who in their lives cherish religious correctness and justice. So let no one do injustice willingly or sail with those who break their oaths. As a god, I speak to mortals.

In this context, the polluted (*μυσαροί*) are clearly not automatic victims of miasma but, rather, the morally bad—those who break oaths and commit unjust deeds willingly. This is a remarkable statement, for it establishes a diametrical opposition between the morally good (those who love *τὸ ὅσιον* and *τὸ δίκαιον*) and the polluted, which lays bare that those who are morally good are perceived as pure. This is in keeping with the attitudes Euripides displays towards inner purity and pollution in his other plays. As we have seen, in Euripides it is the *phren*/*phrenes* that features as a general psychological agent to which moral blame and praise can be extended.[164] Religiously correct thoughts have their seat in the *phren*, which is also the centre of moral or behavioural character. When impious deeds are committed, Euripides portrays the *phren* as polluted.[165] In Castor's speech, the emphasis is placed on metaphysical pollution, not on the bodily one (vv. 1354–5). It is the willingness to commit unjust deeds and perjury that is singled out,[166] and both

[161] vv. 1262–3: *ἵν' εὐσεβεστάτη / ψήφου βεβαία τ' ἐστὶν ἐκ τούτου θέσις.*

[162] Athens is represented as a model of piety throughout Greek tragedy; see on this Mikalson 1991: 62–4, 152–3, 233.

[163] vv. 1329–30: *ἔνι γὰρ κἀμοὶ τοῖς τ' οὐρανίδαις / οἶκτος θνητῶν πολυμόχθων.*

[164] For an analysis of the meanings of the term *phren*/*phrenes* in Euripides' plays, Claus 1981: 54–6 and Sullivan 2000: 10–44, and our discussion in 'Hippolytus' *mega phronein*' in this chapter (pp. 185–90).

[165] See our discussions of *Hippolytus* and *Orestes* in this chapter.

[166] On the perception of perjury as one of the most serious religious transgressions which incurs a metaphysical pollution (divine *agos*), see Ch. 4, pp. 85–7.

of these acts have their origin in the mind: both are the crimes of those who know to differentiate between right and wrong, between what is religiously correct and what is impious, and who nevertheless commit transgressions.

In *Electra*, Euripides reflects on the state of mind of the murderers before and after the impious deed by presenting a matricide committed by siblings, one of whom acted with hesitation and revulsion, the other willingly; he spotlights the problem of intent by having the chorus comment on the deed: when Electra showed remorse and regret, her thinking was characterized as *hosion*, whereas previously it was not.

To accept blame by confronting one's own conscience, as Electra eventually did, has led her thinking to become religiously correct—*φρονεῖς γὰρ ὅσια νῦν, τότ' οὐ φρονοῦσα*. Her newly acquired capacity to do so, clearly stemming from acknowledgement of the notions of morality, responsibility, and justice, vouchsafed her exculpation, deliverance, and divine support: *phronein hosia*, thinking religiously correct thoughts, along with just thoughts, as Castor intimates (1351–3), is what gods scrutinize when deciding whether to help mortals. On the human plane, Euripides yet again stresses the importance of thinking and planning. On the divine plane, he represents the Dioscuri, the gods who are commonly perceived as saviours, inspecting the minds of humans, distinguishing between the morally good and the polluted. Castor elevates the demand for purity from a temporary state required for the performance of religious rituals to a lasting, lifelong condition focused on the self and human intentions rather than on physical cleanliness or temporary abstentions. One possible reason for this striking request for a lasting moral purity is the vicinity of these gods to mortals: Castor and Pollux approach humans in order to save them from the stormy seas, and in order to experience the proximity of the divine, humans have to be morally good.

The ideas examined by Euripides on the tragic stage towards the end of the fifth century BC are also attested in inscriptions from Greek sanctuaries from the early fourth century BC onwards. The famous Epidaurean inscription specifying the conditions of entry to the healing sanctuary of Asclepius stated that the god admits those who are *hagnoi*, and defines *hagneia* as *φρονεῖν ὅσια*.[167] Having religiously correct thoughts renders one pure—and this purity is inward—and enables one to encounter the healing god in his sanctuary. The prerequisites for healing salvation by Asclepius and for salvation by the Dioscuri in the moment of crisis are startlingly similar: in order to experience a soteriological epiphany, one needs to acquire inner, moral purity.

The same language is used to express the same idea in another remarkable inscription, the so-called Delian aretalogy of Sarapis from the third century BC.

[167] See Chaniotis 1997; on this text, discussions, and dating, see 'Belief and Inner Purity' in the Introduction chapter (p. 6) and 'The Language of Inner Purity and Pollution' in the Conclusion chapter (p. 283–4).

This text states that Isis and Sarapis keep close to and save the morally good (*esthloi*) from distress, and further qualifies *esthloi* as those who 'think religiously correct (*hosia*) thoughts in their mind (*nous*) in all circumstances' (ll. 33–4, ἐσθλοῖσιν δὲ σαώτορες αἰὲν ἕπεσθε / ἀνδράσιν οἳ κατὰ πάντα νόῳ ὅσια φρονέουσιν).[168] In this text too, salvation is predicated on moral goodness, and this goodness is acquired by thinking religiously correct thoughts. These are three expressions of the same idea in three different types of texts, and there are further parallels.[169] Rather than postulate a direct borrowing from the Athenian playwright for the sake of outlining the rules of entry to a pan-Hellenic sanctuary of Asclepius and praising the *aretai* of Isis and Sarapis at Delos, we argue that all three texts go back to a popular notion which we trace from Hesiod onwards: the gods are watching and judging humans, not only on the basis of their correct performance of ritual acts, but on the basis of their entire behaviour, paying special attention to their thoughts when encountering the gods. Religious correctness (*hosiotes*) has its basis in the mind.

BACCHAE, PERFORMED AFTER EURIPIDES' DEATH, PERHAPS 405

Summary: Throughout the play, Pentheus' transgressions against Dionysus, his failure to acknowledge the god and to demonstrate proper respect for ritual, are conceptualized as a failure of his *phrenes*. By contrast, the piety and 'ritual correctness' of other characters is represented as 'good thinking' or 'safe thinking' (*eu phronein*, *sophrosyne*). We first analyse how 'bad' and 'good' thinking bears on the notion of piety. We then focus on the idea of the Bacchants' purification of the soul, and discuss the notion of 'purity in life'.

The *Bacchae*[170] explores the notion of piety, the recognition of divine powers, and the expression of this recognition through ritual.[171] The plot juxtaposes

[168] Delian Sarapis Aretalogy, *IG* XI, 4 1299. For the text and commentary, Engelmann 1975; for a commentary, Moyer 2011: 142–205. See 'The Language of Inner Purity and Pollution' in the Conclusion chapter (p. 284).

[169] See also Plu. 378d (*De Iside et Osiride* 68): διὸ τῷ μὲν εἰς τὸ χρηστήριον ἐνταῦθα κατιόντι παρεγγυῶμεν ὅσια φρονεῖν, εὔφημα λέγειν ('For this reason we give instructions to anyone who comes down to the oracle here to think religiously correct thoughts and to speak words of good omen' tr. Babbitt, modified).

[170] On dates, Seaford 1996 and Mills 2006: 8–9, who also provides an overview of the most important scholarship on the play (pp. 152–5).

[171] For a concise, rich, and insightful overview of the history of interpretations of the *Bacchae*, see Versnel 1990: 96–102, with further bibliography, Bierl 1991, Bierl 2011, and contributions to Schlesier 2011. For a summary of the main strands of scholarship on ritual in the *Bacchae*, Mills 2006: 90–6.

a god (*theos*) who has arrived in a new territory and a 'god-fighter' (*theomachos*) who fails to recognize and acknowledge the new arrival as a divinity.[172] Pentheus, the king of Thebes, is the *theomachos*, and his disbelief in the divine powers of Dionysus and his incorrect thinking about the god represent the core of his impiety, *dyssebeia*, and will become the cause of his horrendous death.[173]

Pentheus' sceptical attitude towards the divine powers of Dionysus is expressed as his rejection and critique of the rituals performed by the god's worshippers. In his very first appearance, Pentheus labels the Bacchic rituals as a 'novel [unfamiliar] wickedness' (v. 216, *νεοχμὰ . . . κακά*); he also speaks disparagingly of 'artificial Bacchic rites' (v. 218, *πλαστοῖσι βακχείαισιν*). When he spots his grandfather Cadmus, the former king of Thebes, and Teiresias, the famous Theban seer, both equipped as participants in the Bacchic rites, Pentheus' tirade blasphemously qualifies the rituals as 'wicked' (v. 260, *τελετὰς πονηράς*). He states, furthermore (v. 262), that 'There is nothing at all sound about the rites'.[174] By stressing the 'novelty' and 'artificiality' of the rites—features which are considered deeply suspicious from the point of view of *polis* religion, which exults the role of tradition (*ta patria*) in ritual performance—Pentheus openly challenges the authority of the new god and the status of his rituals.[175]

Throughout the play Pentheus' impiety towards Dionysus is unambiguously portrayed as deriving from his *phrenes*. The *dyssebeia* of Pentheus is explicitly recognized as such by the chorus (v. 263–4), and Teiresias identifies Pentheus' incorrect thinking as its root, stating that there are no *phrenes* in Pentheus' words and that he lacks *nous*.[176] In fact, Teiresias states that, because Pentheus fails to understand the powers of Dionysus and mocks the rituals, he must be 'mad in a most wretched way' and 'diseased' (vv. 326–7); Cadmus expresses a similar view (v. 332).[177]

[172] On the concept of a *theomachos* in drama generally: Kamerbeek 1948, Versnel 1990: 201–13; in Euripides in particular: Diller 1983.

[173] The bibliography is vast; on the issue of Pentheus' character and (im)piety, we single out Seidensticker 1972 (references to pagination follow the reprint of 2005; on Pentheus as a *theomachos*, see there pp. 144–6), with a reassessment in Oranje 1984: 176–87, the detailed survey at Versnel 1990: 96–101, and Mills 2006: 58–69.

[174] The text follows Diggle 1994: *οὐχ ὑγιὲς οὐδὲν ἔτι λέγω τῶν ὀργίων*. Kovacs' Loeb edition of the play (2002) translates *οὐχ ὑγιὲς* as 'diseased'.

[175] Pentheus' inappropriate attitude towards ritual is underlined as one of his greatest transgressions towards Dionysus in the choral song preceding the report of Pentheus' death: vv. 997–8. On the significance of *ta patria* and the function of tradition in articulations of ritual, Chaniotis 2009: 98–102. On the novelty and artificiality of ritual as negative traits: Versnel 1990: 123–31, who also underscores the association of notions of 'novelty' and 'impiety' at Athens in the last decade of the fifth century, and identifies (p. 130) 'a marked resistance to the *novelty* of non-traditional gods and cults' at the time. On Dionysus as a 'new daimon' in Pentheus' perception, and on charges of *assebeia*, Versnel 1990: 158–60.

[176] vv. 268–71.

[177] vv. 326–7: *μαίνῃ γὰρ ὡς ἄλγιστα . . . νοσεῖς*. Cf. v. 359: *μέμηνας ἤδη, καὶ πρὶν ἐξέστης φρενῶν*. Cadmus, addressing Pentheus, v. 332: *φρονῶν οὐδὲν φρονεῖς*.

'Good thoughts' about the god and the ritual, on the other hand, are represented as the prerequisites for piety. The chorus of Asian Bacchants qualifies Teiresias' worship of Dionysus as 'safe-thinking' (*sophronein*, vv. 328–9); Teiresias and Cadmus conclude that their decision to honour the god by dancing is an expression of their good sense (*eu phronein*), while the others think 'badly' (v. 196, *kakos*). When the chorus performs the famous hymn to the personified *Hosia*, 'Ritual correctness' (vv. 370–431), it elaborates on the advantages of thinking versus the disadvantages of a lack of thought, clearly foreshadowing Pentheus' doom and ominously cautioning that the gods do pay heed to human behaviour *and* thoughts (vv. 386–94):[178] 'For the unbridled mouths and unlawful thoughtlessness (*aphrosyna*), the end is ill fortune. But quiet life and the thinking (*to phronein*) remain unshaken and hold a home together. For the heavenly ones [the gods], even though they live far away in the sky, still observe humanity (*ta broton*).'

Pentheus' blasphemy and thoughtlessness towards the god will be transformed due to the divine intervention, before he eventually faces his doom. The only time when Pentheus is able to think good thoughts about the god is, paradoxically, later in the play when he is possessed by Dionysus and is actually mad. Once Pentheus becomes subject to Dionysus' divine powers (vv. 810 ff.) and arrives at Cithaeron equipped as a Bacchant, he requires instructions from the god concerning the correct manner of ritual performance (vv. 941–2). Dionysus responds by praising Pentheus' change of *phrenes* towards the ritual.[179] Pentheus reveals the completely manic state of his *phrenes*, as he wonders if he would be able to carry on his shoulders the glens of Cithaeron with the Bacchants on them (vv. 945–6), and proceeds to perform the Bacchic rites in accordance with the norms and expectations:[180] being properly dressed, finding himself in a proper place and in the state of mind appropriate for the ritual he is performing, he does and experiences what a Bacchant is supposed to do and experience. Dionysus, perhaps ironically, comments (vv. 947–8): 'Earlier you did not have sound (*hygieis*) *phrenes*, but now you have such as you ought to.'[181] In this play Pentheus makes a transition from incorrect thinking about the god, from an inappropriate attitude towards the ritual, accompanied by blasphemy, to good thinking, an appropriate attitude towards the ritual, and madness, due

[178] vv. 386–94: *ἀχαλίνων στομάτων / ἀνόμου τ' ἀφροσύνας / τὸ τέλος δυστυχία· / ὁ δὲ τᾶς ἡσυχίας / βίοτος καὶ τὸ φρονεῖν / ἀσάλευτόν τε μένει καὶ / ξυνέχει δώματα· πόρσω / γὰρ ὅμως αἰθέρα ναίον / -τες ὁρῶσιν τὰ βροτῶν οὐρανίδαι.*

[179] v. 944: *αἰνῶ δ' ὅτι μεθέστηκας φρενῶν*. The statement is (as Mills 2006: 66 observes) ambiguous, as the verb can also denote 'going out of' one's mind. In either case, Dionysus is praising, honestly or ironically, the current mental state of Pentheus.

[180] On the main features of maenadism and initiatory or mystic traits, Bremmer 1984 and Versnel 1990: 132–55. On the vexed issue of the 'madness' of historical maenads, Henrichs 1978, Henrichs 1984, and Goff 2004: 271–5.

[181] vv. 947–8: *τὰς δὲ πρὶν φρένας / οὐκ εἶχες ὑγιεῖς, νῦν δ' ἔχεις οἵας σε δεῖ*. An ironic allusion to Pentheus' statement from v. 262 seems evident.

to the direct intervention of Dionysus. Pentheus' madness in the ritual context is what Dionysus qualifies as appropriate thoughts, thoughts which are apparently 'sound'. From Dionysus' perspective, madness indeed does represent the correct inner disposition required for the ultimate goal of the ritual in which Pentheus participates: inner purification. It is the ritual revelry in the hills, *oribasia*, as audiences are reminded at the beginning of the play, that purports to purify the souls of the initiates. In a striking passage from the first choral song, the Asian Bacchants refer to their ritual pursuit of inner purity (vv. 72–7):

ὦ μάκαρ, ὅστις εὐδαί-
μων τελετὰς θεῶν εἰ-
δὼς βιοτὰν ἁγιστεύει
καὶ θιασεύεται ψυ- (75)
χὰν ἐν ὄρεσσι βακχεύ-
ων ὁσίοις καθαρμοῖσιν…

> Blessed is he who, having a good *daemon* and knowing the rites of the gods, is pure in life and an initiate of the revel band (*thiaseuetai*) (with) his soul celebrating Bacchic rites (*baccheuon*) in the mountains with religiously correct purifications.

Two particularly remarkable features of this passage are the references to the purification of the soul and to the pursuit of lifelong purity (*βιοτὰν ἁγιστεύει*).[182] Rather than singling out a particular set of purity requirements or specific abstentions as a prerequisite for participation in rites, the passage implies that the commitment to the Bacchic rites in itself serves as a means of purification. The revelry in the hills (*oribasia*), with the apparent reference to the 'celebration of the Bacchic rites with the soul', seems to be what constitutes 'religiously correct purifications', as Robert Parker suggests.[183] If we take the phrase *ψυχὰν ἐν ὄρεσσι βακχεύων* (vv. 75–7) in the causal sense of 'filling the soul with frenzy during the Bacchic rites', then Parker's suggestion of 'holy purifications' as being a homeopathic release from anxieties or madness is further corroborated.

The performance of *oribasia* at regular intervals as a means of purifying the soul seems to be an important aspect of 'purity in life'.[184] Another aspect

[182] There are several difficulties concerning the syntax which our translation attempts to mirror. The passive voice of the verb *thiaseuo*, 'to be initiated into the *thiasos*; to celebrate Bacchic rites', poses some difficulties in associating it with the accusative *psychen*, and *backheuo* is well attested as a transitive verb: it is possible to interpret the reference to the soul both as 'devotion to the band of initiates with the soul' and as 'filling the soul with frenzy during the Bacchic rites'.

[183] Parker 1983: 288.

[184] Parker 1983: 289 points out that the verb *hagisteuo* normally has a precise application. It is difficult to discern whether Euripides in his portrait of the Bacchae alludes to initiatory cults

of this pure life is a lifelong commitment to specific values. These are outlined in verses 1006–10, when the chorus states that 'there are other qualities, great and clear, that bring the life of mortals to good things, to be pure (*euagein*) day and night and to be pious (*eusebein*), to honour the gods, and to reject the customs which are outside of what is just'.[185]

In sum, the idea that complete dedication to the rites and devotion to Dionysus—and to Dionysus in particular of all the gods[186]—is a lifelong commitment is intimated twice in the play. The issue of the historicity of such requests is a complex one. Robert Parker astutely observes that, although temporary rules of purity are common as a preparation for specific rituals, it is odd that the request in the *Bacchae* relates to a lifetime.[187] In verses 1006–10 the purity is, in our opinion, not defined as avoidance of physical pollutants—this would bring an end to the human race, as essential biological acts such as birth and sex are polluting. Instead, the word *euagein* points towards an avoidance of metaphysical pollution, divine *agos*, and it is to be understood as opposite to *enages*. While *enages* denotes a person who is metaphysically polluted and 'subject to perilous consecration',[188] *euages* would denote those who are metaphysically pure, and represent one who was subject to gratifying divine protection. *Euages*, to some extent, could be taken to be synonymous with *eudaimon*.

The lifelong purity in the *Bacchae* has sometimes been compared to a fragment from Euripides' *Cretans*,[189] which features a chorus of initiates who refer to the 'leading of a pure life' (v. 9, *ἁγνὸν … βίον τεύχομεν*). However, they also mention the wearing of white clothes, avoidance of pollution by birth and death, and adherence to a vegetarian lifestyle.[190]

which fostered eschatological hopes, or to the 'traditional Maenadism'. All the benefits of the Dionysus worship in the *Bacchae* refer to this life; as Parker observes (p. 289), 'immediate psychological well-being is more likely to be … the aim [of holy purifications], than a better lot in the afterlife'.

[185] vv. 1006–10: *τὰ δ' ἕτερα μεγάλα / † φανερὰ τῶν ἀεὶ † ἐπὶ τὰ καλὰ βίον, / ἦμαρ ἐς νύκτα τ' εὖ / -αγοῦντ' εὐσεβεῖν, τὰ δ' ἔξω νόμιμα / δίκας ἐκβαλόντα τιμᾶν θεούς*, with Willink's emendation at 1006: *φάνερ' ἄγει θνατῶν*.

[186] Versnel 1990: 194–8, 205 famously identified the portrayal of Dionysus in the *Bacchae* as a portrayal of a Hellenistic god *avant la lettre*, pointing out that the play, by elaborating the special status of Dionysus and the notion of the god's singular nature ('there is no god like this god'), reflects a henotheistic ideology which is amply attested from the Hellenistic period onwards. The insistence on complete dedication to the rites of this particular god, and the formulation of this commitment as a 'way of life', in our view additionally corroborates Versnel's case.

[187] Purity requirements for the initiation were stricter than for other rituals; the ordinary maenads would have great difficulties following these purity restrictions on an everyday basis: Parker 1983: 289. For an interpretation of this passage in the context of mysteries, see Seaford 1996 and Schlesier 1998: esp. 56–67.

[188] See 'Metaphysical Pollutions' in the Introduction chapter (p. 30).

[189] Parker 1983: 288–9.

[190] Cozzoli 2001: 57–8 (Fr. 1), Collard and Cropp 2008: 536–9, no. 472 = Austin Fr. 79. Casadio 1990 discusses the passage in the context of Orphic requirements, a view reassessed by Cozzoli 2001: 83–4.

This parallel is further complicated by Adele-Teresa Cozzoli's observation that Euripides' initiates in the *Cretans* mirror distinct Cretan cults: while the members of the chorus in the *Cretans* do label themselves *bacchoi* (v. 15), they also state that they are initiates (*mystai*) of Idean Zeus (v. 10) and herdsmen (*boutai*) of Zagreus (v. 11), and that they perform rituals for the Mother (Rhea/Cybele) 'among the Curetes (v. 13–14)'. All three references reflect local Cretan cults and practices,[191] which makes it difficult to assert how far the requirements from the *parodos* of the *Cretans* extend beyond a specific Cretan context, and whether they can be taken as valid for the Theban setting of the *Bacchae*.[192]

To return to the *Bacchae*. The insistence on the worshipper's lasting purity, and the apparent reference to the purification of the soul, may derive from the nature of the god himself. In this play Dionysus is pictured as keeping in close contact with his worshippers, as instructing them in their rites (vv. 470–5) or personally participating in their dances (vv. 565–85). When Teiresias enthusiastically extols the many good features of Dionysus' discovery, wine, he states that Dionysus is himself the wine (v. 284) that frees men from worries. Finally, Dionysus can enter the body (*soma*) of a mortal and cause a manic state (vv. 300–1). Here too, therefore, proximity to the divine correlates to the heightened state of purity which the worshipper needs to maintain.

[191] Cozzoli 2001: 79–93, and esp. 85 on v. 10.

[192] Bremmer 2014: 66–8 argues that, in this fragment, Euripides combines 'several ecstatic cults that can be connected with initiation' (p. 66), including 'Orphism'.

11

Aristophanes' 'Pure Mind'

FROGS, PERFORMED 405 BC

Summary: In verse 355, the leader of the chorus of the initiates in the underworld modifies the Eleusinian *prorrhesis* to include purity of thoughts (*γνώμην μὴ καθαρεύει*). We argue that this demand should not be perceived as a ritual request, but as a parody of the *prorrhesis* of the Eleusinian mysteries.

In *Frogs*, Aristophanes represents Dionysus and his slave Xanthias journeying to the underworld in order to bring back Dionysus' favourite tragic poet, Euripides. Prior to the journey, Dionysus quizzes Heracles about the various possibilities of entering the underworld, and Heracles explains that, once there, Dionysus will first encounter the sinners lying in the vast sea of mud and dung; after this he will see the light and hear the pipe-music; and then in the groves of myrtle he will meet the happy troops of dancing men and women, the mystic initiates, who live very close to Pluto's palace.[1] It has long been noted that this particular depiction of the underworld resembles the eschatological ideas associated with the Eleusinian mysteries.[2]

Along the way, Dionysus first encounters a funeral procession and attempts to convince the corpse to carry his luggage to Hades.[3] The god not only approaches the corpse but, what is more, converses with it freely, completely oblivious to any pollution he may incur. This is a telling indication of the diametrically different attitudes of tragedy and comedy towards pollution—whereas tragic characters, both gods and men, display a keen awareness of pollution and attempt to avoid it, in comedy its role is almost negligible.[4] Euripides' Artemis, for example, proclaims that for her, it is 'not lawful to

[1] vv. 145–64. [2] Sommerstein 1996: 169, with bibliography. [3] vv. 170–9.
[4] On the various literary genres' attitudes towards pollution, Parker 1983: 13–17.

look upon the dead';[5] a statement which is in keeping with the universal Greek sacred law which prohibits birth and death within a sanctuary;[6] Aristophanes' Dionysus, by contrast, has no qualms whatsoever about approaching a corpse, and even haggles with it.

Once in the underworld, Dionysus and Xanthias encounter the chorus of initiates, who sing the hymn to Iacchus and invoke the god to come and join the company of his pious devotees. Their dance is described as 'pure and religiously correct' (vv. 334–5): *ἁγνήν, / ἱερὰν ὁσίοις μύσταις χορείαν*.[7] Even though this cletic hymn is invoking Iacchus, a god who was identified with Dionysus in Attica, Aristophanes' Dionysus does not demonstrate any awareness that the initiates are addressing him.[8] To add to this comic paradox, the chorus is asking Iacchus to light their way with his torch and to lead them forth in their dances (vv. 350–2), but it is they who are carrying torches and providing light for the god, and it is he who asks their leader for the way to Pluto's palace (vv. 431–3).[9]

After the cletic hymn, the leader of the chorus utters a proclamation (vv. 354–71):

> *εὐφημεῖν χρὴ κἀξίστασθαι τοῖς ἡμετέροισι χοροῖσιν,*
> *ὅστις ἄπειρος τοιῶνδε λόγων ἢ γνώμην μὴ καθαρεύει,* (355)
> *ἢ γενναίων ὄργια Μουσῶν μήτ' εἶδεν μήτ' ἐχόρευσεν,*
> *μηδὲ Κρατίνου τοῦ ταυροφάγου γλώττης Βακχεῖ' ἐτελέσθη,*
> *ἢ βωμολόχοις ἔπεσιν χαίρει μὴ 'ν καιρῷ τοῦτο ποιούντων,*
> *ἢ στάσιν ἐχθρὰν μὴ καταλύει μηδ' εὔκολός ἐστι πολίταις,*
> *ἀλλ' ἀνεγείρει καὶ ῥιπίζει κερδῶν ἰδίων ἐπιθυμῶν,* (360)
> *ἢ τῆς πόλεως χειμαζομένης ἄρχων καταδωροδοκεῖται,*
> *ἢ προδίδωσιν φρούριον ἢ ναῦς, ἢ τἀπόρρητ' ἀποπέμπει*
> *ἐξ Αἰγίνης Θωρυκίων ὢν εἰκοστολόγος κακοδαίμων,*
> *ἀσκώματα καὶ λίνα καὶ πίτταν διαπέμπων εἰς Ἐπίδαυρον,*
> *ἢ χρήματα ταῖς τῶν ἀντιπάλων ναυσὶν παρέχειν τινὰ πείθει,* (365)
> *ἢ κατατιλᾷ τῶν Ἑκαταίων κυκλίοισι χοροῖσιν ὑπᾴδων,*
> *ἢ τοὺς μισθοὺς τῶν ποιητῶν ῥήτωρ ὢν εἶτ' ἀποτρώγει,*
> *κωμῳδηθεὶς ἐν ταῖς πατρίοις τελεταῖς ταῖς τοῦ Διονύσου·*
> *τούτοις αὐδῶ καὖθις ἐπαυδῶ καὖθις τὸ τρίτον μάλ' ἐπαυδῶ*
> *ἐξίστασθαι μύσταισι χοροῖς· ὑμεῖς δ' ἀνεγείρετε μολπὴν* (370)
> *καὶ παννυχίδας τὰς ἡμετέρας, αἳ τῇδε πρέπουσιν ἑορτῇ.*

> Let all speak fair, and let these stand out of the way of our dances,
> whoever is unfamiliar with words such as these—
> or has thoughts that are not clean—
> or has not seen or danced in the sacred rites of the true-bred Muses,

[5] *Hipp*. 1437. [6] Parker 1983: 33–4.
[7] We quote the text after Wilson 2007. [8] Bierl 1991: 37–8.
[9] Bierl 1991: 38 argues that Dionysus' loss of identity in the first half of the *Frogs* is an indicator of the crisis of Athenian tragedy.

nor has been initiated in the Bacchic verbal mysteries
of bull-devouring Cratinus—
or delights in words of buffoonery from men who
choose the wrong time to behave thus—
or does not endeavour to resolve the internal strife that threatens
us and is not peaceable towards other citizens,
but stirs it up and fans its flame out of a
desire for private advantage—
or is an office-holder who takes bribes to harm
the city when it's struggling on heavy seas—
or betrays a fort or a fleet—or is a damnable five-per-cent-collector
like Thorycion who exports contraband from Aegina,
sending oarport-leathers, flax and pitch across to Epidaurus—
or induces anyone to supply money from our adversaries' navy—
or is a soloist in cyclic choral performances
who shits on the offerings to Hecate—
or is a politician who goes and nibbles away at the fees of poets
after having been satirized in the course
of the ancestral rites of Dionysus.
To these I proclaim, and again I proclaim the ban,
and again a third time do I proclaim the ban,
that they stand out of the way of the initiates' dances;
but do you awaken the voice of song
and begin the all-night revels which befit this our festival.[10]

As has long been recognized, the beginning and end of this speech correspond closely to the priestly proclamations preceding the Eleusinian initiation rites: the final, threefold iteration (vv. 369–70) is, according to the scholiast, a direct quotation of the words uttered by the chief priest of the Eleusinian mysteries from the Stoa Poikile; the opening *ὅστις ἄπειρος τοιῶνδε λόγων ἢ γνώμην*[11] *μὴ καθαρεύει* (v. 355) is an echo of the announcement by the hierophant excluding certain people from participation in the Eleusinian mysteries—those who did not understand the Greek language and whose hands were impure. It is impossible to determine with any certainty whether the Eleusinian proclamation included a demand for a pure *ψυχή* in the 5th century BC.[12] The demand for pure hands is usually interpreted as excluding homicides.[13] Such priestly proclamations (*prorrheseis*)

[10] Translation: Sommerstein 1996.

[11] *γνώμῃ*, accepted by some editors, e.g. Henderson, instead of *γνώμην*, does not affect our interpretation.

[12] Isocr. 4.157; Julian *Or.* 7.25, Origen, *Cels.* 3.59; Theon of Smyrna 14.24 Hiller. Libanius, Decl. 13.19.52 mentions purity of *ψυχή* as a prerequisite for participation. We discuss the issue of inner purity in mystery cults in Vol. II. The latest discussion of the process of initiation, with full bibliography, is Bremmer 2014: 2–16, who, however, associates notions of inner purity and pollution with late antiquity (see esp. p. 4).

[13] Isoc. 4.157; see also Burkert 1985: 186–287.

are well attested in the ancient Greek world,[14] and the order εὐφημεῖν χρή is a common requirement for participation in sacred rituals.[15] However, Aristophanes' Chorus-Leader apparently modifies and broadens the Eleusinian prohibition, to include purity of γνώμη.

What reason did Aristophanes have for altering the Eleusinian proclamation? To answer this question, it must first of all be noted that the situation he describes is not an initiation ritual, but a ritual performance by the *mystai*—those who had been initiated while alive and are now celebrating Iacchus and Demeter in the underworld.[16] Even though the hymning and the proclamation do bear some resemblance to distinct ritual actions, they are at a significant remove from the 'real' religious ceremonies. Aristophanes distinguishes the processional hymn and the priestly announcement from proper ritual actions by first presenting the invoked god, Dionysus, as completely oblivious of the invocation, and second, by representing the ritual celebrations not as the initiation ritual but as an aspect of the initiates' life in the underworld.

Secondly, we must consider the dramatic context of this speech. By having the leader of the initiates address the external audience of the drama simultaneously with his internal audience, the *mystai*, Aristophanes is breaking the fourth wall and distorting the ritual he presents. The leader of the *mystai* effectively adapts the Eleusinian proclamation to correspond to the performative situation of the comedy. Accordingly, it is no longer those who do not speak Greek who are excluded, but those who are unfamiliar with 'this kind of speech' (v. 355, ἄπειρος τοιῶνδε λόγων). Alan Sommerstein suggests that the *logoi* mentioned here signify the speech characteristic of comedy, that is, the specific language of the genre.[17] Indeed, the following lines single out the 'secret rites of the true-bred Muses' and the 'Bacchic verbal mysteries of Cratinus', which further affirms that Aristophanes does not present a veritable account of initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries. Instead, he conceptualizes his own play and comedy at large as a mystic ritual which requires initiation. He modifies the Eleusinian *prorrhesis* to fit the context of the comic performance.

Like Aristophanes' other plays, *Frogs* has a strong political message: Dionysus is initially governed by the passion of his heart[18] and wishes to resurrect Euripides, but over the course of the play he becomes aware of the political significance of tragedy for the salvation of Athenian morals and decides to bring back Aeschylus instead. What is at stake is the salvation of the city, and Aristophanes sees the moral education of the citizens by means of poetry as a way towards accomplishing this goal. The political element of

[14] Dickie 2004.
[15] For a thorough analysis of the phenomenon of euphemia, Gödde 2011.
[16] Bowie 1994: 228–9. [17] Sommerstein 1996: 187. [18] vv. 52–4, 66, 103.

the play is strongly stressed in the speech of the Chorus-Leader when he lists the following transgressors as excluded from the dances: bribed politicians, smugglers, traitors, and politicians who do not support poets.[19] In essence, those who undermine the city's political solidarity and incite civil discord (*stasis*), and those who strive for personal gain to the detriment of the community (vv. 359–60) are the sort of people who should be excluded, whereas the demand for 'purity of mind' in this context can be understood as a necessary prerequisite for participating in Aristophanes' dramatized quasi-ritual of moral education.

The mystery ritual of Eleusis, which fostered an individual, personal, soteriological eschatology, is used in *Frogs* as a foil for reflecting on the possibilities of collective salvation. In a paradoxical and comic turn, Aristophanes uses the *prorrhesis* of the ritual which leads to personal salvation in order to denounce those who think solely about personal gain.

Aristophanes' *Frogs* is, in essence, a critical assessment of Athenian tragedy.[20] As we have argued in Chapters 7–10, it was tragedy that repeatedly emphasized the importance of purity of mind as a necessary prerequisite for successful ritual performance. It can hardly be a coincidence that it is precisely in the comedy which discusses the importance of tragedy for the moral education of the citizens that we find a programmatic announcement which demands a broader, morally based, concept of ritual purity. In sum, verse 355 cannot be perceived as a veritable ritual request, but it is a comment on Athenian tragic discourse on rituals.

[19] On Aristophanes' strategy of setting political crimes in the Eleusinian context, Bowie 1994: 239–44, who concludes (p. 244) that in *Frogs* the Eleusinian mysteries are 'evoked as a way of thinking about participation in and ordering of the state'.

[20] The literature on this is vast; see Hunter 2009*a*: 10–52, with bibliography.

Part V

A Different Kind of Inner Purity

12

Inner Purity and Pollution in the Beyond

The Evidence of the Gold Leaves (OF 488–491 (= Graf/Johnston nos. 5–7, 9))

Summary: We focus on the 'Orphic' gold tablets OF 488 (= Graf/Johnston no. 5), 489 (= Graf/Johnston no. 7), and 490 (= Graf/Johnston no. 6), found in Thurii and dated to the beginning of the fourth century BC, and OF 491 (= Graf/Johnston no. 9), found in Rome and dated to AD 260. In the first line of these texts the soul of the deceased is presented as 'pure, coming from the pure' (*ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρά*). We analyse ritual purity in the tablets from the perspective of 'Orphic beliefs'. The pure psyche in the tablets is a consequence of the 'Orphic' cathartic ritual which renders the soul of the initiate pure and fit to address the divinities in the underworld. With the 'Orphics' we encounter ritual purification and the resulting purity of the psyche as an investment in salvation; the focus of purity is the human soul, and the aim of the purification is soteriological.

By the late sixth century BC a new religious concept had emerged in the Greek world, one which focused on the salvation of the soul. It is believed to have attracted attention soon after its appearance, and the reasons for this would be understandable: it was based on the idea that the human soul outlives the body, and, provided that particular rituals were performed, it offered the hope of a blessed existence after death.

This concept is traditionally labelled 'Orphism', after Orpheus, the mythical Thracian bard who made a visit to the underworld.[1] Orpheus was credited with a large body of poetry, including a *Theogony*, *Descent to Hades*, *Sacred Writing* (*ἱερὸς λόγος*), *Argonautika*, and most significantly, the *Hymns*. This poetry provided the basis for the theological and eschatological ideas of 'Orphism'; some sources also associate the 'Orphic books' with the performance of rituals.[2] This is as much as can be ascertained with confidence;

[1] On Orpheus, see now Bremmer 2014: 56–8, with bibliography; on the term 'Orphism', Bremmer 2014: 58–9.

[2] Orpheus' books are connected with the rituals in Pl. *R.* 364e and Eur. *Hipp*. 952–4. There are, however, also texts which modern scholarship conventionally labels as 'Orphic' because,

beyond this, everything relating to 'Orphism' and the 'Orphics' is a matter of lively scholarly debate, and one which is bedevilled by a long history of entrenched positions on virtually every point. Even the use of the term 'Orphics' causes controversy, as it implies a religious movement, an organized group, or a sect, with a systematic and consistent set of beliefs, and the attribution of such a degree of structure to 'Orphism' is questioned by an increasing number of scholars.[3] Current scholarship predominantly takes the position that the eschatological beliefs and rituals associated with 'Orphism', including the initiation ritual, were in constant flux, subject to considerable geographical and chronological variations, and neither systematically controlled nor directed. If anything, 'Orphism' was less subject to control and oversight than the traditional Greek cults. The reason for this, in the words of Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, was that it was the *polis* that 'provided the fundamental framework in which Greek religion operated', since it 'anchored, legitimated and mediated all religious activity'.[4] The *polis*, in the institutional sense, is unlikely to have exercised any influence over the beliefs and initiatory rituals of the 'Orphics'. What matters for the purposes of our discussion, however, and what we take as given is, firstly, the existence of eschatological texts and beliefs associated with 'Orphism', and secondly, the existence of rituals which were performed in accordance with 'Orphic' beliefs as formulated in these 'Orphic' texts.

Let us turn to the texts. A body of gold tablets unearthed in Petelia and Thurii, inscribed with brief hexametrical poems describing the arrival of the soul in the underworld, was connected with 'Orphism' in the late nineteenth century.[5] Similar tablets were subsequently discovered in a variety of regions, and most scholars currently perceive these, too, to be testimonies of 'Orphism'.[6] The tablets are small, thin pieces of inscribed gold leaves, found in graves in Italy (Petelia, Hipponium, Thurii, Rome), several sites in Crete, and Thessaly. The earliest attested to-date is from around 400 BC, and comes from Hipponium in southern Italy.[7]

although they are not explicitly attributed to Orpheus, they share similar ideas; on the gold tablets, see our further discussion here. On the oddity of book-guided rituals in the view of ancient Greeks, Parker 2011: 16–17. On the use of books in 'Orphism', Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2011, Edmonds 2013: 95–123, Bremmer 2014: 60–6.

[3] For excellent discussions of problems with the term 'Orphic', see Parker 1995 and Edmonds 2013: 195–208; for the most recent trends and positions in scholarship, see Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008, and contributions in Edmonds 2011.

[4] Sourvinou-Inwood 2000: 13 and 15. See also Parker 2011: 57–61 and Kindt 2012 for recent evaluations of the concept of *polis* religion.

[5] On the history of scholarship on the gold tablets, Graf and Johnston 2007: 50–65; Edmonds 2013: 11–70.

[6] Notable exceptions to this view are Zuntz 1971 and Edmonds 2004. A full overview and discussion of the arguments in favour of an association between 'Orphism' and the gold tablets is available in Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 179–205—expanded in their 2011: 68–101—and in Edmonds 2011 and 2013.

[7] OF 474. The references and the text follow Bernabé's Teubner edition of the *orphica* (abbreviated OF).

The tablets are divided into two types: the first type, commonly labelled the 'A' tablets, deals with purity; the second type, commonly labelled the 'B' tablets, contains instructions relating to geographical markers in the underworld, and provides directions to assist wayfarers as they travel through this realm.[8] These tablets are sometimes called 'the passports of the dead'. Fritz Graf and Sarah Iles Johnston succinctly explain the difference between the geographical and the purity tablets:

> The keys to success in the geographic tablets were knowing where to go, what to drink and what to say to the guards about one's pedigree; in the purity tablets, it is still important to know what to say, but the emphasis will lie on establishing the nature of the initiate's soul, which has been changed during the process of initiation, and the soul will speak to the Queen of the Underworld herself, rather than her guards.[9]

It is the purity tablets, emphasizing the nature of the soul of the departed, which provide crucial evidence for our understanding of the role that the purity of the soul played in 'Orphism'.

We investigate four of these tablets: OF 488 (A1 = Graf/Johnston no. 5), 489 (A2 = Graf/Johnston no. 7), 490 (A3 = Graf/Johnston no. 6), and 491 (A5 = Graf/Johnston no. 9). OF 488–90 were unearthed from a single burial mound in Thurii, and are dated to the early fourth century BC. OF 491 was uncovered in Rome and, dated to around AD 260, is almost seven centuries younger than the tablets from Thurii, but corresponds closely to these in tone and content.

We begin by quoting the texts in full:

OF 488
ἔρχομαι ἐκ κοθαρῷ<ν> κοθαρά, χθονί<ων> βασίλεια,
Εὐκλῆς Εὐβο<υ>λεύς τε καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι·
καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ὑμῶν γένος ὄλβιον εὔχομαι εἶμεν.
ἀλ<λ>ά με Μο<ῖ>ρ'{α} ἐδάμασ<σ>ε {καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι}.[10]
κύκλο<υ> δ' ἐξέπταν βαρυπενθέος ἀργαλέοιο, (5)

[8] The division into A and B texts is based on the edition of Zuntz 1971.

[9] Graf and Johnston 2007: 121. The fullest discussion of purity in the 'Orphic' texts is that of Edmonds 2013, Ch. 7.

[10] Between vv. 4 and 5 the gold leaf renders *καὶ ἀσ{σ}τεροβλῆτα κεραυνῷ* or *κεραυνόν*, labelled as 4 b in Graf and Johnston 2007: 12–13. Graf and Johnston point out that the last three feet of the hexameter in vv. 4 and 4b are metrically equivalent, but represent semantic variations. While they print *καὶ ἀστεροβλῆτα κεραυνόν* in the text of the poem, their translation ('and the star-flinger *with* lightning') refers to the reading *καὶ ἀστεροβλῆτα κεραυνῷ* (as printed also in OF 488 by Bernabé). Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 100 translate the line as 'he that wounds from the stars with lightning'. Both translations imply that the 'star-flinger' is the one who has subdued the deceased, and Bernabé, in his edition *ad loc*., remarks that 'Moira' and 'star-flinger' refer to the same thing: '*sunt quasi hendiadys, duo modi ad unam rem referendi: mortem mystae*.' For *ἀστεροβλῆτα*, 'he who wounds from the stars with the lightning', and *ἀστεροπῆτα*, 'he who makes lightning blaze forth', see Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 111–12.

ἱμερτο<ῦ> δ᾽ ἐπέβαν στεφάνο<υ> καρπαλίμοισι,
δεσ{σ}ποίνας δ᾽{ε} ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν χθονίας βασιλείας·
{ιμερτοδαπεβανστεμανοποσικαρπασιμοισι}
‘ὄλβιε καὶ μακαριστέ, θεὸς δ᾽ ἔσῃ ἀντὶ βροτοῖο’.
ἔριφος ἐς γάλ᾽ ἔπετον.

I come pure from the pure, queen of those in the underworld,
Eucles and Eubouleus and other immortal gods.
For I profess that I am also of your blessed race,
but Moira [and the other immortal gods] conquered me.
I flew out from a difficult circle full of grievous woes (5)
and with swift feet I went towards the coveted wreath
and I dived into the lap of the mistress, queen of the underworld.
[*repetition of line* 6]
‘Prosperous and most blessed, instead of a man, you will be a god.’
A kid, I fell into milk.

OF 489

ἔρχομα<ι> ἐ<κ> κα<θα>ρῶν {σχονων} καθαρά, χ<θ>ονίων βασίλ{η}ει<α>,
Εὐκλε καὶ Εὐβουλεῦ {ι} καὶ θεοὶ <καὶ> δαίμο<ν>ε<ς> ἄλλοι·
καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ὑμῶν γένο<ς> εὔχομαι ὄλβιον εἶναι
πο<ι>νὰν δ᾽ ἀνταπέ{ι}τ̣ε{σε}ι<σ>᾽ἔργων ἕνεκα οὔτι δικα<ί>ων.
εἴτε με Μο<ῖ>ρα ἐδάμασ<σ>᾽ {ατο} εἴτε ἀστεροπῆτᾳ κ<ε>ραυνῶν. (5)
νῦν δ᾽ ἱκέτι<ς> ἦκω πα<ρα>ὶ ἁγνὴ<ν> Φε<ρ>σεφόνε<ι>αν,
ὥς με{ι} πρόφ<ρ>ω<ν> πέμψῃ ἕδρας ἐς εὐαγέ{ι}ων.[11]

I come pure from the pure, queen of those in the underworld,
Eucles, and Eubouleus, and other gods and demons.
For I profess that I am also of your blessed race,
and that I have requited the punishment for the unjust deeds,
either Moira conquered me, or the lightener
who strikes with a thunderbolt. (5)
Now I arrive as a suppliant to pure (*hagne*) Persephone
so that she would willingly send me to the seats of the pure.

OF 490

ἔρχομαι ἐ<κ> καθαρῶ<ν> καθ<αρά, χθ>ο<νίων> βασιλ<ει>α,
Ε̣ὔκλε{υα} κα<ὶ> Εὐβο<υ>λεῦ καὶ θεοὶ <καὶ> {ὅσοι} δ̣<αί>μονες ἄλλοι·
καὶ γὰρ ἐ<γ>ὼ<ν> ὑ<μῶν> γένος εὔχομα<ι ὄ>λβιον ε<ἶ>να<ι> {ὄλβιο}
ποινὰν <δ᾽> ἀ̣ν̣ταπέτε<ισ᾽> ἔργω<ν ἕνεκ᾽> ο<ὔ>τι δικα̣<ί>ων.
ε<ἴ>τ<ε> με Μοῖρα <ἐδάμασσ᾽> ε̣<ἴτε ἀσ>τεροπῆτᾳ {κη} κεραυνῷ<ν>. (5)
νῦν δὲ <ἱ>κ<έτις> ἦκω {ιικω} παρ᾽ ἁ<γνὴν> Φ<ερ>σε<φόνειαν>,
ὥς {λ} με <π>ρόφ<ρων> πέ[μ]ψ<ῃ> {μ} ἕδρας ἐς εὐ<α>γ<έων>.

[*Translation as for OF 489.*]

[11] On the term *euages* see also our discussion of the *Bacchae* in Ch. 10.

OF 491
ἔρχεται ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρά, χθονίων βασίλεια
Εὔκλεες Εὐβουλεῦ τε Διὸς τέκος· ἀλλὰ δέχεσθε,
Μνημοσύνης τόδε δῶρον ἀοίδιμον ἀνθρώποισιν.
'Καικιλία Σεκουνδεῖνα, νόμῳ ἴθι δῖα γεγῶσα.'

She comes pure from the pure, queen of those in the underworld,
Eucles and Eubouleus, offspring of Zeus. But receive
this gift of Mnemosyne, sung about among mortals.
'Caecilia Secundina, go, after you have lawfully become a goddess.'

All four texts are composed in dactylic hexameters,[12] and all four address 'the queen of the underworld', a title, as OF 489, v. 6 and 490, v. 6 make clear, of Persephone. After Persephone, the texts address 'Eucles' and 'Eubouleus', which seem to be epithets of Hades and Dionysus respectively;[13] the Thuriian tablets add 'other gods and demons'. In all four texts, the narrator is designated as pure in the opening line, and speaks in the female gender and in the first person singular. It is possible that all four were written for female individuals, but the gender of the deceased is certain only in OF 491, which includes a name. An alternative, and in our view much more plausible, explanation is that the narrator is the soul (*ἡ ψυχή*), which is gendered as feminine in Ancient Greek.[14] In a gold tablet from Hipponium, dated to the fifth century BC, the dead are explicitly conceptualized as *psychai* who travel to Hades.[15] This parallel bolsters the suggestion that OF 488–90 are narrated by the soul of the deceased (*psyche*), and that it is this soul which is introduced as 'pure'.[16]

What kind of purity does the soul claim to have? It professes to be *καθαρά*, 'coming from the pure' (*ἐκ καθαρῶν*). In the language of Greek ritual, the adjective *καθαρός* denotes a temporary state of purity required for attending religious ceremonies and for entering sacred space. Here, however, this temporary state allows the soul to address the goddess of the underworld. Scholars

[12] OF 488, v. 10 and the name of Caecilia Secudina from 491, v. 4 are in prose. There are prose (or metrical prose) lines in some texts, discussed by Riedweg 2011 (esp. at 243–4).

[13] *Eucles*, 'of good reputation', is an epithet, here probably used to designate Hades. *Eubouleus*, 'of good counsel', is an epithet of Dionysus in various 'Orphic' hymns; alternative, and less convincing suggestions include the association of Eubouleus with Zeus Chthonios and Hades. For a full discussion, see Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 102–5, and the recent contribution by Bremmer 2013: 35–48.

[14] Obbink 2011: 298–300 offers an innovative, but in our view rather speculative, interpretation of the use of the female gender in the tablets.

[15] OF 474, v. 4: *ἔνθα κατερχόμεναι ψυχαὶ νεκύων ψύχονται*, 'there, the souls of the deceased who have arrived below refresh themselves…'.

[16] Psyche is also assumed to be the narrator by Graf and Johnston 2007, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2011, and Herrero 2015. Even if we found a leaf stating *ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρός* ('I, a male, am pure, and come from the pure') instead of the attested *ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρά* ('I, a female, am pure, and come from the pure'), the entity speaking in the underworld would still have to be conceptualized as the psyche of the deceased.

argue that the purity which the soul claims for herself in the tablets is the result of a specific initiation involving expiatory purification, performed by professional initiators into the mysteries, the so-called *orpheotelestai*.[17] The existence of these *orpheotelestai* is attested in the Classical period. They were itinerant religious experts in possession of 'Orphic' books, which they used in the process of catharsis and initiation.[18] A further possible purification method might have been the observance of a series of precepts such as vegetarianism, abstinence from eggs and beans, and sexual moderation.[19] These abstentions, which are attested in a wide variety of heterogeneous and chronologically disparate sources, should by no means be regarded as a universal, exclusive, or consistent aspect of 'Orphism', which is itself a fluctuating and vague concept.[20]

The soul not only asserts that it is pure, but also that it 'comes from the pure'. This has been taken by some scholars as evidence for the existence of a ritual community or communities, and as an indication that 'the speaker defines himself/herself as belonging to a group characterized by solidarity and the maintenance of a similar ritual situation'.[21] The insistence on purity, of the individual or of the group, squares well with what Plato calls 'the Orphic life', and with his intimations that this way of life fostered eschatological hopes and had a soteriological goal.[22] Alternatively, coming pure 'from

[17] Graf and Johnston 2007: 121–2, 130, 133–4; cf. 134: 'the soul was initiated into Dionysus' mysteries while alive, in the course of which it erased from itself the stain of Titans' crime.' See our further discussion of the purification ritual. The term *orpheotelestes* was apparently employed by outsiders rather than by the 'Orphics' themselves (cf. Bernabé on OF 224), and it is attested only three times (in Theophrastus, *Char*. 16.1–12, Philodemus, *Po*. fr. 181 Janko, and Plutarch *Apophth.Lac.* 224e). Following the widespread modern convention, we employ *orpheotelestes* as a technical term to denote the religious experts for whom 'Orphics' themselves employed a variety of terms (*magoi*, *manteis*, *hiereis*, etc.).

[18] For a discussion of the sources, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 91–4; Calame 2011: 203–18; Edmonds 2013: 200–47; Bremmer 2014: 69–70.

[19] Parker 1983: 286–91; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 101–2; Bremmer 2014: 66–9.

[20] For a discussion of the sources (and the related difficulties) associated with issues of 'Orphic' purity, Edmonds 2013: 231–41, with further literature.

[21] Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 101–2; similarly Bremmer 2014: 75. For a different position, Edmonds 2013: 198–208 and 220–5. Graffiti from Olbia dated to the fifth century BC throw some light on the question: see Zhmud 1992. Zhmud adopts a reservedly optimistic stance on the question of the existence of 'Orphic' communities. It should be reiterated that OF 488–90 all come from a single tumulus; as R. Edmonds has pointed out to us via email, 'there is an increasing number of short B tablets from the cemetery near Eleutherna…The nature of the group remains uncertain, however, and it is worth mentioning the hypothesis of a group of clients of a ritual practitioner, whose only group identity consists in their use of the practitioner's services.'

[22] For the explicit mention of the 'Orphic life' and what it entails according to Plato, see *Lg*. 782c and the discussion in Parker 1983: 288–90 and Bremmer 2014: 66–9. R. Edmonds, points out via email, however, that 'only the Plato testimony actually refers to "Orphic lives" (interestingly in the plural), in contrast to the large number of testimonies that refer to a "Pythagorean life." The singularity of the Platonic testimony raises the question of whether it might imply a very different kind of idea, e.g. the kind of lives that people were said to have lived once upon a time in an Orphic poem. The comparison with the tale in Empedocles of the lives without blood sacrifice is, I think, the most useful here.' On Empedocles, see Ch. 4; on Pythagoras, Ch. 2.

the pure' could mean that the soul of the initiate claims that she has been purified, and so have her ancestors. This would be in line with what Plato states about *orpheotelestai* who claim that they can cure any wrongdoing of a man or his ancestors.[23]

Although it is difficult to determine the extent to which the tablets testify to the existence of a community of the pure, what is certain is that the soul asserts her personal purity. In the two tablets from Thurii the soul also claims that she has 'requited the punishment for unjust deeds'.[24] What is meant by 'unjust deeds'? Scholars commonly seek an explanation for this phrase in the 'Orphic' myth about the birth and death of Dionysus. According to 'Orphic' lore, Dionysus is the son of Zeus and Persephone, rather than Semele,[25] who was appointed by his father as his successor, but whom the envious Titans dismembered and devoured. As a punishment, Zeus killed the Titans with a thunderbolt, and humanity came into existence from their remains. As a result, each human is born with the stain of the Titan's crime, but also with a remnant of Dionysus. Each human must expiate the Titan's sin by performing rituals in honour of Dionysus and Persephone, who still suffers from the ancient grief of losing her child.[26] Already in Pindar we find references to Persephone who accepts compensation from human souls for her 'ancient sorrow', which probably represents a poetic allusion to the 'Orphic' version of the Dionysus myth.[27]

The purity tablets demonstrate that it was of paramount importance for the soul to assert her purity first and foremost to Persephone, as the queen of

[23] Pl. *R.* 364c: *ἀδίκημά του γέγονεν αὐτοῦ ἢ προγόνων*. Graf and Johnston 2007: 147 and Gagné 2013: 455 argue that Plato was thinking of concrete ancestors as the objects of the rituals in this passage. See also our later discussion of Plato's testimony on *orpheotelestai*.

[24] OF 489, v. 4; 490, v. 4.

[25] Some texts, however, reconcile both births in a mythographical effort—hence the epithet *trigonos*, 'thrice born', for Dionysus (born by Semele, Persephone, and Zeus). On the epithet, Athanassakis and Wolkow 2013: 125–6 and 162.

[26] On the 'Orphic' version of the myth of Dionysus, see Parker 1995: 494–5 and Graf and Johnston 2007: 66–93 (with testimonia and bibliography). In his review of Graf and Johnston 2007, Edmonds (*BMCR* 2007.10.35) propounds the sceptical view, stressing that the only attestation of the myth of Dionysus which includes the story of the Titan's murder of Dionysus *and* the creation of humans from their joint ashes is by the sixth-century AD Neoplatonist Olympiodorus. Edmonds sees a problem in the attempt to argue that this synthetic myth was created, with all of its component parts, already in the sixth century BC, and maintains: 'While they do a nice job of explaining how a bricoleur in the sixth century BCE might have formed each part of this Zagreus myth from extant traditions, providing a good list of these themes and motifs on pp. 90–1, they never explain why one should imagine a single act of bricolage, by a single bricoleur, at a single point in time, rather than a series of acts of bricolage, by a number of bricoleurs, over the whole span of time from which the evidence derives—from the sixth century BCE to the sixth century CE.' (The exciting history of scholarship on the constructions and deconstructions of the myth is summed up by Edmonds 2013, Ch. 9.) See, however, Bernabé 2002 and 2003, who persuasively argues that the myth of Zagreus can be traced as far back as the Classical period.

[27] Pi. fr. 133 Maehler with Graf and Johnston 2007: 68–9. See also Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 106.

the underworld where souls expect hospitality, then to Dionysus, as Eucles, and Hades, as Eubouleus, and, lastly, to 'the other gods'.[28] If the 'unjust deeds' from which the soul declares expiation do refer to the ancestral blood-guilt that all humans inherited from the Titans,[29] it would make sense that they should address Persephone, as the mother of the murdered Dionysus, first.

This myth seems to have lain at the core of what some scholars perceive as being the 'Orphic' beliefs regarding metempsychosis, to which OF 488, v. 5 refers: 'I flew out from a difficult circle full of grievous woes.'[30] It has been argued that these serial reincarnations from one physical body to another represent a punishment for the ancestral fault.[31] According to those who accept the notion of a somewhat unified 'Orphism' with a certain degree of theological consistency, the following picture emerges: the cycle of reincarnations from one wretched somatic existence to the next stands in sharp contrast to the destiny of those souls which subjected themselves to initiation (τελετή), and which have thereby managed to avoid the torment of the uninitiated.

Now that we have presented the texts and outlined the beliefs which, with varying degrees of confidence, can be associated with 'Orphism', we can turn to the key theme of our discussion, the relationship between purity and ritual, and ask: exactly what role did the purity of the soul play in the 'Orphic' rituals?

Scholars have advanced compelling arguments to support the view that the texts inscribed on the gold tablets were liturgical scripts intended for ritual performance. This raises the question of what kind of rituals were to be performed. The answer to this remains elusive, due to the sheer difficulty of assessing the chronologically and geographically disparate evidence for 'Orphism'—which consists of literary sources, inscriptions, and visual material, often of a late date—and it continues to be a subject of lively scholarly

[28] On the identity of the divinities, see n. 13.

[29] For a careful assessment of the evidence concerning ancestral fault in the tablets, Gagné 2013: 457–60.

[30] Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2011: 78–81 discuss the notion of the cycle, κύκλος, in OF 488, and argue that the accumulated evidence speaks clearly in favour of a particular doctrine of metempsychosis. They analyse evidence pertaining to the terms 'cycle' and 'wheel' (τρόχος), and point out that the terms suggest that 'the initiate conceives this life, or rather, the succession of lives the soul must go through both as a cycle, and as a wheel' (p. 79). Besides the leaf quoted above, they also adduce views expressed in the Neoplatonic material (Procl. *in Ti.* 3.296.7 Diehl, *in Ti.* 3.297.7, Simp. *in Cael.* 377.12 Heiberg (cf. OF 348)), which is likely to include some retrojections. In his analysis of this text, Riedweg 2011: 233–4 also interprets verse 5 as reference to metempsychosis. He sees 'Moira' as designating not death but mortality: 'To be separated from the gods and entering the "cycle" of reincarnations, which was obviously equated with "death" by adherents of Orphism.' Parker 1995: 487, however—and plausibly, in our view—raises the question of whether *all* 'Orphic' eschatology was built on a particular doctrine about the nature of men and their souls, and points out that, with the currently available evidence, we cannot reach a decisive answer to this question.

[31] The evidence includes early references to punishment too: see Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2011: 79–80.

discussion. Some scholars have put forward the view that the texts played a role in the funeral ritual;[32] some have argued that the texts were used in the initiation rituals performed by the *orpheotelestai*;[33] others have pointed out the possibility that some or all of the elements of the initiation ritual were re-enacted in the context of a funeral ritual.[34] Fritz Graf and Sarah Iles Johnston offer a careful and insightful re-evaluation of the debate over, and the evidence for, 'Orphic' initiation rituals.[35] The use of the term *mystai* in recently unearthed tablets makes it clear that the deceased had been initiated; since the term *mystai* is coupled with *bacchoi* in the Hipponium tablet from around 400 BC (OF 474, l. 16), it is suggestive that the mysteries are those of Dionysus. On the basis of this evidence, we can perhaps assume that the tablets refer to 'Orphic' cathartic initiations, and there can be little doubt that these initiations were performed by the ritual experts.

Plato offers interesting glimpses into the kind of information his contemporaries had about the rituals of the *orpheotelestai*.[36] In the *Republic* (364b–366b), Adeimantus lashes out against the itinerant specialists, whom

[32] Zuntz 1971: 306–45 argues that the rituals were 'part of a Pythagorean *missa pro defunctis* celebrated at the burial of those who took the tablets with them to the other world' (p. 343); Burkert, in Graf 1991: 99 n. 31 and Burkert 1996: 119, argues that they were 'addressing the initiate who has just died' (see also Burkert 1993). Similarly, also Graf 1991 and 1993, though he retracts this position in Graf and Johnston 2007: 137–64. Segal 1990 favours 'funerary performance', but adds: 'although of course an initiation rite for a mystes cannot be excluded' (p. 413).

[33] Graf and Johnston 2007: 137–64 and Bremmer 2014: 55–80. Obbink 2011 and Riedweg 2011 provide a re-evaluation of the scholarly debate over the function of the tablets in ritual. Both Obbink and Riedweg rely mainly on the texts as transmitted in the tablets for an attempt to elucidate their role in cult, and they arrive at similar conclusions: for Obbink, the tablets served as a reminder for the deceased of the initiation rituals which they had undergone when they were alive; according to Riedweg, all of the leaves represent sequences based on the same long, continuous narrative in hexameters, which he calls *hieros logos* and which he reconstructs (pp. 247–52). He suggests that this *hieros logos* was a poem that 'narrated a sequence of different "trials" ("*epreuves*") which would await the soul in the underworld after death and of which the leaves of the various groups have taken out only one or the other' (p. 246). The poem was attributed to Orpheus and was transmitted in writing, but it was also performed orally as a part of the initiation ritual. It was 'probably made known to the *mystes* by the Orphic–Bacchic priest within the frame of the παράδοσις' (p. 254). The leaves 'were destined to record core passages taken from the ἱερὸς λόγος on durable material and to save them indelibly in the *mystes*' memory' (p. 255). Different *orpheotelestai* had different ideas about what was most important for recording, which explains why different stages of the journey are reflected in different groups of leaves.

[34] Janko 1984: 97, following Pugliese Carratelli 1975: 228–9, argues for a combination of funerals and initiations: 'The initiates must have undergone a certain doctrinal preparation, which, if it did not prevent alterations in their sacred texts, did preserve them from incomprehensible deformations… The redactors of the Ἱερὸς Λόγος, writing down versions from time to time upon the burial of an initiate, might reassemble its formulae as each knew or could, perhaps even from memory.' See also Riedweg 1998: 371; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: *passim*.

[35] Graf and Johnston 2007: 137–64. See also Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 90–4 and Edmonds 2013: 211–47 for two different approaches to a discussion of the material.

[36] For a discussion of the passage, Gagné 2013: 451–5.

he calls 'begging priests and seers', who 'go to rich men's doors and convince them that they possess power from the gods acquired through sacrifices and incantations and that, if there had been some wrongdoing (*adikema*) of their own or of their ancestors, they can remedy it with amusements and festivities'.[37] He adds that:

> they present a throng of books of Musaeus and Orpheus, the offspring of the Moon and the Muses, as they say, which they rely on while sacrificing. They convince not only individuals, but whole cities that there indeed are liberations (*lyseis*) and purifications (*katharmoi*) from unjust deeds (*adikemata*), by means of sacrifice and pleasant entertainment, both for the living and for the deceased, which they call initiations (*teletai*). These liberate us from evils in the other world, but horrible things await those who do not sacrifice.[38]

In Adeimantus' opinion, such rituals are dangerous, especially for the young and impressionable, and he sees the danger in promising absolution for unjust deeds, since some could take this as an excuse to commit crimes and live unjustly, knowing that they can be absolved. As the poets claim that the hearts of the gods can be persuaded and swayed through oaths and sacrifices, one can do what one wants, and pray and sacrifice to be forgiven. Adeimantus imagines the travelling priests as replying to this:

> 'But we will suffer a punishment in Hades should we commit any wrongdoing in this world, either we ourselves, or our children's children.' He [*sc.* the travelling priest] would say that, according to his reckoning, the initiations (*teletai*) together with the gods of deliverance (*lysioi theoi*) are extremely effective in this respect, as the greatest cities attest and the children of the gods who became poets and prophets of the gods, and disclose that this is the state of things.[39]

Plato's critical comments draw on the knowledge of his contemporaries, who would have been able to recognize his references and to identify the rituals. Modern scholars struggle to reconstruct the 'Orphic' ritual practices, due to the scanty and chronologically disparate evidence that has survived.

[37] Pl. *R.* 364b–c: *ἀγύρται δὲ καὶ μάντεις ἐπὶ πλουσίων θύρας ἰόντες πείθουσιν ὡς ἔστι παρὰ σφίσι δύναμις ἐκ θεῶν πoριζομένη θυσίαις τε καὶ ἐπῳδαῖς, εἴτε τι ἀδίκημά του γέγονεν αὐτοῦ ἢ προγόνων, ἀκεῖσθαι μεθ' ἡδονῶν τε καὶ ἑορτῶν.*

[38] Pl. *R.* 364e–365a: *βίβλων δὲ ὅμαδον παρέχονται Μουσαίου καὶ Ὀρφέως, Σελήνης τε καὶ Μουσῶν ἐκγόνων, ὥς φασι, καθ' ἃς θυηπολοῦσιν, πείθοντες οὐ μόνον ἰδιώτας ἀλλὰ καὶ πόλεις, ὡς ἄρα λύσεις τε καὶ καθαρμοὶ ἀδικημάτων διὰ θυσιῶν καὶ παιδιᾶς ἡδονῶν εἰσι μὲν ἔτι ζῶσιν, εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ τελευτήσασιν, ἃς δὴ τελετὰς καλοῦσιν, αἳ τῶν ἐκεῖ κακῶν ἀπολύουσιν ἡμᾶς, μὴ θύσαντας δὲ δεινὰ περιμένει.*

[39] Pl. *R.* 366a–b *Ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἐν Ἅιδου δίκην δώσομεν ὧν ἂν ἐνθάδε ἀδικήσωμεν, ἢ αὐτοὶ ἢ παῖδες παίδων. Ἀλλ', ὦ φίλε, φήσει λογιζόμενος, αἱ τελεταὶ αὖ μέγα δύνανται καὶ οἱ λύσιοι θεοί, ὡς αἱ μέγισται πόλεις λέγουσι καὶ οἱ θεῶν παῖδες ποιηταὶ καὶ προφῆται τῶν θεῶν γενόμενοι, οἳ ταῦτα οὕτως ἔχειν μηνύουσιν.* For a discussion of these passages, Hoessly 2001: 199–203; Graf and Johnston 2007: 144–5; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 91–2; Gagné 2013: 451–5.

If we do attempt to reconstruct a single composite initiatory ritual based on this material—a methodologically hazardous procedure but, in the circumstances, a necessary evil—we can gather that these initiations emphasized the afterlife, that purification was their central concern, and that they had a strong ecstatic element. The ritual experts used tympana (hand-drums), wine was drunk (possibly at a later stage of the ritual), and the rituals aimed to alter the initiate's state of consciousness, which 'expressed itself in orgiastic, ecstatic song, music and dance'.[40] The 'geographical tablets', which describe the journey of the soul in the underworld, also allow us to speculate that the descent into the underworld could have played a role in the staging of the ritual.[41]

The initiation ritual which permanently changed the religious status of the initiate was probably a singular occurrence. Plato's testimony and the Derveni Papyrus certainly suggest that this was the case, and the humorous representation of Theophrastus' superstitious man, who drags his whole family to the *orpheotelestes* every month, probably ridicules this bizarre behaviour.[42] It remains unclear whether maintaining purity through a specific 'Orphic way of life' following the initation was also a prerequisite for achieving a better lot in the afterlife. There may well have been, as some scholars argue, individuals among the initiated who aimed at living in accordance with stringent dietary regulations.[43] Plato's remarks could perhaps be interpreted as hinting at the wealthy citizens who did not trouble themselves with living ascetically, but were satisfied with the state of purity gained by completing the initiation ritual.[44] Regardless of the number of rituals that were required, however, what matters most for our present discussion is that purification was at the core of the initiation rite, and formed the basis of the eschatological hopes it provided.

Since we are able to submit with some confidence that the main purpose of this initiation ritual was purification, we can return to the purity tablets and explore the types of purity attested there. Three distinct ritual terms associated with purity feature in OF 488–90: *katharos*, which the soul claims for herself, and the group from which she arrives; *hagnos*, which is reserved for Persephone; and *euages*, which is associated with those pure souls (*katharai psychai*) whose supplication the goddess has accepted with a kind mind

[40] Graf and Johnston 2007: 177; a similar point is also made by Hoessly 2007: 80–2.

[41] This seems to emerge from Plu. fr. 178 Sandbach = OF 594.

[42] Theophr. *Char*. 16.

[43] These claims, too, are based on sound textual evidence. See Parker 1983: 286–91 and Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 101–2. It seems rather unlikely, however, that the notion of what exactly constituted an 'Orphic way of life' was universal or uniform. It might have differed from place to place, and perhaps even from individual to individual, and especially so among the 'non-Orphics': in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, for instance, Theseus has no qualms about referring to his son, a carnivore and a hunter, as an 'Orphic' (vv. 948–57). On purity in *Hippolytus*, see 'The Hippolytean Way of Life' in Ch. 10 (pp. 198–9).

[44] Parker 1983: 304.

(*prophron*), and who are allowed to inhabit a privileged place in the underworld.

Kathara is the term the soul uses in her declaration before the goddess. This state of purity results from a specific ritual which was performed while the soul was inhabiting a living body. The meaning of *ek katharon* is debatable—as we have seen, it could refer to the ancestry of the deceased, or to the ritual community of the initiates to which the deceased belonged.[45] Since the status of a *kathara psyche* was acquired during one's lifetime, the process of initiation seems to have included the removal of the taint which had stained the soul before it could claim to be *kathara*. The removal of this stain can only refer to the removal of a metaphysical pollution; in OF 489 and 490 this process seems to relate to the acceptance of the punishment for the 'unjust deeds'; in OF 488, to a ritual that brought an end to 'the cycle of grievous woes'.

'Unjust deeds' could refer either to the Titanic crime, or to an individual's personal or ancestral transgressions which need not be associated with the Dionysiac complex of myths, or to both. If the 'unjust deeds' in OF 489 and 490 do refer to the Titanic crime, then the process of catharsis firstly entails acquiring consciousness of the inherited transgression—knowledge about the crimes committed. Secondly, it presumes acceptance of a punishment. The same mechanism must be at work also for the personal or ancestral wrongdoing—the acknowledgement of the crime, followed by the acceptance of a punishment. In either case, the pollution that needs to be removed is metaphysical.

It is in this ritual elimination of metaphysical pollution, an elimination so permanent that it extends to the soul which transcends the physical body, that the innovative usage of the term *katharos* in these texts lies: from the point of view of traditional Greek religion, it is striking, even paradoxical, that the deceased are labelled as *katharoi*. In Greek culture the dead were conventionally conceived of as polluted, and as actively emitting pollutants. After death, not only is a corpse polluted, but also an entire house and its inhabitants. Even the gods who associate with the dead could be perceived as polluted.[46] It seems that the notion of the pure soul is based on a stark dichotomy between body and spirit. In fact, one of the basic elements of 'Orphic' beliefs was that the soul is an alien element in the living body; the body was even seen as 'a fence' which kept the soul inside it, like a prison.[47]

The soul's argumentation before the queen is thus based on two premises: the first is that the deceased belonged to a certain group; the second is that the deceased had perfected their soul by the ritual removal of the metaphysical

[45] See this chapter, pp. 254–5.

[46] On Hecate, Parker 1983: 222–4.

[47] Pl. *Cra*. 400c, and *Phd*. 62b with Casadio 1991: 123–5. Further early testimonies of this doctrine are the Olbia graffiti, on which see Zhmud 1992.

stain accomplished through initiation, as the term *telete* suggests.[48] The soul's acquired status of *kathara* vouchsafes a direct and beneficial engagement with the goddess.

The soul's reference to Persephone as *hagne* (OF 489, v. 6 and 490, v. 6), 'pure', but also one 'who commands respect', returns to the traditional language of ritual communication in which the worshipper acknowledges the status and the powers of a divinity in order to demonstrate their piety, and to increase the chances of a felicitous hearing. The purpose of the audience with Persephone is for the soul to be granted hospitality and favours. The process of obtaining hospitality in OF 489 and 490 has three steps: (1) the soul claims to be pure and to belong to the 'blessed race' (*olbion genos*); (2) she seeks acknowledgement of her status as a suppliant from the *hagne* Persephone, in order to (3) acquire permission to inhabit a place where not merely the *katharoi*, but also the *euageis*, the metaphysically pure, and those who are subject to persistent gratifying divine protection, are allowed to dwell.

The acquisition of the status of a *katharos* by means of initiation is for the living, therefore an elementary prerequisite for ontological transcendence based on a series of transformations. These transformations begin with a mortal who becomes an initiate, whose soul acquires the status of being *kathara*. This, in turn, allows her to plead a case in front of the queen; finally, if the goddess decides so, she may progress to another realm in the beyond, that of an *euages* member of a 'blessed race'.

The situation is different in OF 488. Here the soul claims purity, but does not mention the requital of the punishment for the unjust deeds. Instead, a reference is made to the 'cycle of grievous woes' (v. 5), which, as we have noted, some scholars interpret as referring to metempsychosis.[49] In this tablet no mention is made of supplication, or of the admission to the company of the *euageis*. Instead, the soul is assured that it will become 'a god instead of a man' (v. 9).

In the 'purity tablets' it is the state of purity obtained through the ritual of initiation which enables the souls to address Persephone, and to gain permanent residence in a special section of the underworld. Whereas in other Greek cults the state of purity is a necessary prerequisite for the performance of a ritual, it seems that the entire purpose of the 'Orphic' *teletai* was to obtain inner purity, which is then maintained until the moment of death, when the soul is separated from the body and journeys to the underworld to address Persephone. In effect, the *telete* constitutes a preliminary cathartic rite preparing the initiate for the performance of the most important ritual—the audience with Persephone in the underworld, which, in OF 489 and 490, has the form of a supplication.

[48] Cf. LSJ, s.v. τελέω A5.

[49] See this chapter, p. 256.

This is not to say that purity does not play an important role in the geographical tablets. On the contrary, the realm of the underworld described in these tablets resembles sacred grounds as we know them from 'mainstream' Greek religion—the souls of the initiates travel on the 'sacred road',[50] drink from the 'sacred spring',[51] and journey towards 'the sacred meadows and groves of Persephone'.[52] In order to enter this space, which is represented as sacred, they must be pure. In order to address the goddess, however, they must explicitly *present* themselves as pure—the closer they get to the divinity, the more urgent it becomes to demonstrate their purity. A pure psyche is a prerequisite for performing the ritual of transcendence, a token requested by the goddess for admission to the realm of the *euageis*. With the 'Orphic' gold tablets, then, we encounter ritual purification with an exceptional, almost exclusive, emphasis on inner purity, the purity of the psyche, as the path to divine favour and as a guarantee of eschatological bliss.

[50] OF 474, vv. 15–16 = Graf and Johnston 2007, no. 1.15–16.
[51] OF 476, v. 10 = Graf and Johnston 2007, no. 2.10.
[52] OF 487, v. 6 = Graf and Johnston 2007, no. 3.6.

Conclusion

Inner Purity and Pollution in Greek Religion

> Religion, in other words, is in the mind. It consists not so much in religious acts as in schemes of perceptions and thoughts whose meaningfulness is repeatedly reinforced by the performance of symbolic acts.
>
> (Richard Gordon, in Versnel 2011: 471)

Throughout this book we have explored the inner stance of Greek worshippers, such as they appear in individual and varied guises of the pre-Platonic sources, rather than that of 'the Greek worshipper' as a generalized amalgam. There has been an occasional excursus touching upon post-Platonic material, but only when the complexities raised by the argument required further clarification. The outcomes, we believe, are several. The most immediate one is that notions of inner purity and pollution exist as certifiable religious beliefs from early on, and that these can be traced in a variety of discourses, associated with a number of rituals, and anchored in a diverse spectrum of social, cultural, and intellectual settings before the end of the fifth century BC.

Instead of being products of late processes of interiorization of purity, or inhabitants of the remote fringes of Greek religious thought (although we find them there too), or late migrants from 'the Orient', concepts of morally understood inner purity and pollution are discernible in central Greek texts, associated with central Greek rituals, inhabiting the inner selves of a Bronze Age farmer, Archaic aristocrat, philosophers' disciples, members of more-or-less distinct religious groups (Bacchic initiates and 'Orphics' respectively), and a whole array of prominent characters represented in Attic tragedy.

The previous chapters have endeavoured to test the concepts of inner purity and pollution and inspect their contents through isolated soundings of their role and agency in ritual contexts. At the beginning of this book we stated that the inner state of the ancient Greek ritual performer matters greatly, and that it carries implications both for general notions of piety and for ritual efficacy. What we identified in a number of discourses are requests

for inner purity as rooted in *eusebeia* and demonstrated as ritual correctness, but also as a voucher for divine proximity, a fosterer of hopes of deliverance, a foundation of eschatological expectations, and an investment in personal and communal safety.

In a nutshell, concepts of inner purity and pollution emerge from our analysis as propositional beliefs of the Greeks—inner purity represents an attribute of the inner self which can be obtained for the temporary duration of the ritual (or longer), and which can be lost under specific conditions. But both the conditions under which inner purity is obtained as well as those under which it can be lost mirror attitudinal beliefs expressed in a variety of discourses, some of which reveal conceptual overlaps. Among such overlaps, apart from the language employed for the qualifiers and seats of purity noted later on, are also the means of obtaining purity: in order to get rid of inner pollution Hesiod and the *Theognidea*, for instance, envisage prayer as the means of inner purification. The overlap, however, is not complete—prayer in Hesiod seems to be a self-purifying prayer which, through an act of contemplation, eliminates *kakotes* from the *nous* of the one praying, while in the *Theognidea* the agency of purification resides with Apollo. Prayer in association with inner purity is attested also in Xenophanes and Pythagoras (as far as we can tell), yet there it is not, it seems, conceptualized as the means of purification but as an expression of an already acquired inner purity, of a 'well-disposed mind' and a soul 'pursuing purity'. Both the 'well-disposed mind' and the soul 'pursuing purity' are results of mental self-control and contemplation. A further mode of inner purification is reflection resulting from the confrontation with one's self and its transgressions—*synesis*, as our reading of Euripides' *Electra* suggests. Another mode is closely associated with rituals which are particularly directed towards the *psyche* as the seat of inner purity, and are associated with initiations, as the *Bacchae* and the evidence of the gold leaves suggest. On the flipside, we identified a variety of attitudinal beliefs concerning potential polluting forces. These comprise inappropriate religious thoughts encapsulated in the wrongful motivation towards a ritual which, for instance, pollutes the minds of Agamemnon, Theseus, and the Aegyptids. But they also extend to transgressions of the self which threaten to tear apart the social fabric: in *Hippolytus*, Phaedra's passion for her stepson is her miasma of the *phrenes*; the Nurse's immoral proposal incites a wish in Hippolytus to wash his ears, hoping thereby to purify his self (and washing as means of *inner* purification will become a frequently attested concept in later sources[1]); perjury as a particularly potent polluting force is explored by Greek writers from Empedocles to the authors of tragedy.

[1] We return to this in Vol. II. On the 'Hippolytus effect', see 'The Nurse's Abuse of Ritual Supplication and Oath' in Ch. 10 (pp. 203–6).

Our second contention, therefore, namely that inner purity possessed a moral dimension, and that this represented an integral part of the early Greek purity beliefs, seems justified too—as we observed time and again, the notion of inner purity is often interlocked with notions of honesty, loyalty, faithfulness, selflessness, and assertion of the principles of justice, righteousness, and of sexual decorum. Inner impurity, on the other hand, is regularly associated not just with wrong intentions and transgressive thoughts in the ritual context, but also, and relatedly, with disregard of and disrespect for moral values—inner impurity is intertwined with dishonesty, perjury, unfaithfulness, scheming and plotting, selfishness, self-serving intentions subordinating and undermining the interests of the group or community, and inappropriate sexual impulses.

In this concluding chapter we return to the issues of definition of inner purity and address the place of inner purity and pollution in the broader context of Greek belief. We then present our general observations regarding the language of inner purity and impurity, and provide an overview of their seats (i.e. where they are regarded as being situated in the human subject) and qualifiers. We compare this language with the terminology employed in the epigraphic evidence, and move on to general conclusions regarding continuities of thought and historical patterning. Finally, we offer our general observations concerning the role and status of inner purity in the various subsystems we have discussed.

INNER PURITY, DIVINE SCRUTINY, AND BELIEF

The fundamental propositional belief which underlies the concepts of inner purity and pollution is that the gods are watching and judging humans. This idea plays a major role in Hesiod's world-view as formulated in the *Works and Days*. Not only are gods constantly observing humans (v. 250), they are assisted by countless watchers (vv. 250–3), and the goddess of Justice herself, Dike, is able to look into the *minds* of men and she reports her findings to Zeus directly (vv. 256–62).[2] This role of Dike 'remained a fundamental religious concept in the classical period,'[3] and beyond.

In the *Theognidea*, the gods also 'know the mind of men' (vv. 897–900), and Zeus especially so (v. 375). Among the tragedians, Euripides is particularly keen to emphasize that the gods see everything, including the minds

[2] West 1978: 219, com. ad v. 249 adduces Indo-European parallels and further attestations in epic and tragedy, asserting that this motif is 'a piece of Indo-European heritage'; p. 221, com. ad v. 259 provides attestations for the motif of a god receiving report of mortal misdeeds from a servant.

[3] Dover 1974: 255. On the role of Dike in Aeschylus, Lloyd-Jones 1971: 97–103.

of humans. In *Hippolytus*, Artemis appears at the end of the play as the only authoritative judge of the characters' *phrenes*. She even states that she has come to 'clearly reveal the righteous mind' (*ekdeixai phrena … dikaian*, vv. 1298–9) of Hippolytus. In Euripides' *Electra*, Castor and Pollux form decisions on whether to save people from shipwreck based on the contents of their minds—the polluted, *mysaroi* (by which oath-breakers and perjurers are meant), should have no hopes of divine deliverance (vv. 1350–6).[4]

The idea that the gods are capable of knowing human thoughts was so widespread that Athenian orators habitually reminded jurors of divine omniscience, warning them that, even though the votes they cast are secret to humans, they are known to the gods.[5] Some questions put to the oracle at Dodona testify that those seeking guidance from the god assume that the god knows what is on their minds.[6] Finally, the phenomenon of silent prayers and vows, attested from Homer onwards, is an additional testament to the ancient Greek belief that gods can see into one's mind.[7]

Robin Osborne has argued recently that pollution 'acknowledges the subordinate position of men to gods and puts the gods at the centre of the social order'. He contends that pollution is a category focalized from the divine perspective and that it demanded 'seeing what the gods see'.[8] On the basis of these observations, Osborne concludes that pollution beliefs function as one of the systems of social control. Even though Osborne does not discuss inner pollution, his observations are important for understanding the underlying principles of inner pollution: if the gods are focalizers of miasma, and if they can see into human minds and souls, then they have the capacity to identify pollution located inside the human self. The idea that gods are watching and can see into people's minds is old and persistent, and its logical corollary—that it is this inspection that matters, and especially so in the ritual context—is old and persistent as well.[9]

The fundamental idea that gods are watching and judging becomes concrete in the moments of ritual performance when it is necessary to establish communication with the divine. Ritual purity in general matters in the ritual context, and this pertains to inner purity too, for in the moments of ritual action humans are particularly exposed to divine gaze and scrutiny.[10] However,

[4] For further attestations in Euripides, Dover 1974: 257.

[5] Dover 1974: 258; cf. Lycurg. *Leocr*. 146–7: 'Know well that each of you, though casting your vote now in secret, will nevertheless make his thoughts apparent to the gods' (*φανερὰν ποιήσει τὴν αὑτοῦ διάνοιαν τοῖς θεοῖς*); similarly D. 19.239; 59.126; Lys. 6.53. See on these passages also Eidinow 2015: 62–6.

[6] Eidinow 2015: 68–70 provides a discussion of examples.

[7] Dover 1974: 258. On silent prayers and vows, van der Horst 1994.

[8] Both quotations Osborne 2011: 183; for an assessment of Osborne's views on pollution, see also 'History of Scholarship' in the Introduction chapter (p. 24).

[9] On the reflection of this idea in the 'confession inscriptions' from Phrygia and Lydia, see Chaniotis 1995 and 2004, with bibliography.

[10] On the belief that gods watch performance of rituals, see Naiden 2013: 326–8.

not all rituals are the same with respect to the perceived degree of divine proximity. In our evidence, some rituals imply a particularly close contact with the divine, and it is precisely in the case of these rituals that inner purity is either stressed with great urgency, or a heightened degree of inner purity is required. Robert Parker observed the same mechanism at work in relation to the purity of body when he remarked that, 'the closer a mortal comes to sacred objects, the more acute becomes his need for sexual purity'.[11] Inner purity at the moment of river-crossing, as outlined by Hesiod, matters especially, as we argue, because rivers are divinities, and hence 'permission to engage' amounts to permission to immerse oneself into a divinity. In Euripides' *Hippolytus*, the eponymous character maintains a particularly strict and permanent state of inner and outer purity because he enjoys a particularly close and direct contact with the divine. In the *Bacchae*, the lifelong purity and regular purification of the soul derives, it seems, from the nature of the divinity with whom the worshippers seek contact. In Euripides' *Electra*, inner purity is again perceived as a lifelong condition in a specific context of soteriological epiphany. Finally, the 'Orphic' gold leaves are most explicit in the construction of the soul's purity as permission to engage directly with Persephone—the soul has to assert its purity in order to address the goddess in an envisaged direct conversation.[12] What follows from this, then, is that divine scrutiny and inspection of the human inner self matter greatly in the ritual context in general, but that in some cases a clear interdependence between exceptional proximity of the divine and exceptional inner purity is articulated.

The notion that the inner selves of humans are scrutinized by the gods represents one of the tenets of the more general Greek concept of belief. But it was this belief in divine scrutiny in particular that influenced and shaped worshippers' projections about divine expectations, the agency of gods, the worshippers' control of their inner selves, and the appropriate behaviour that is a product of this particular constellation of premises. In other words, Greek attitudes towards inner purity can be classified as beliefs—at least according to the definition of belief as developed in the cognitive science of religion.[13] Cognitive science of religion has shown itself to be productive in recent thinking about the role of belief in Greek religion.[14] Cognitive science defines mental states, such as beliefs, desires, and emotions, by their functional roles in the cognitive system. Drawing on cognitive sciences and functionalist philosophy, Barrett and Lanman have in 2008 defined 'belief' as: *the state of a cognitive system holding information (not necessarily in propositional*

[11] Parker 1983: 91.

[12] See Ch. 1 on Hesiod, Ch. 10 on *Hippolytus*, the *Bacchae*, and *Electra*, and Ch. 12 on the gold leaves.

[13] For a brief overview, Sørensen 2005, for a more detailed presentation of the most important recent theories, van Slyke 2011.

[14] Harrison (forthcoming), with bibliography.

or explicit form) as true in the generation of further thought and behaviour. It should be made clear that cognitive science distinguishes between explicit and implicit beliefs. Whereas explicit beliefs are conscious, implicit beliefs are unconscious—what we commonly call 'gut feeling' or 'intuition'. Implicit and explicit beliefs are interconnected. Studies have shown that humans hold many implicit beliefs about agents, space, and time, and that these implicit beliefs influence our explicit beliefs. Implicit beliefs about the nature and behaviour of physical objects are the reason why some of us have tremendous difficulties in understanding quantum physics, or in conceptualizing god as an agent who is not located in space and time.[15]

The ancient Greek notion of inner purity, as an explicit belief, conforms to this definition insofar as it is *a state of a cognitive system holding information in both propositional and explicit form as true* (gods are observing me during ritual performance; my inner self is also accessible for divine scrutiny; the agency of the gods towards me depends on this scrutiny) *in the generation of further thought* (I have to obtain inner purity ~ 'think religiously correct thoughts' ~ 'purify the soul' ~ 'rid my mind of badness') *and behaviour* (abstention from sources of inner pollution accompanied by behaviour resulting from the acquired state of inner purity ~ the pursuit of moral and religious correctness).[16]

THE LANGUAGE OF INNER PURITY AND POLLUTION

In our Introduction we provided an overview of the ritual contexts in which the concepts of inner purity and pollution appear, and we intimated at the start that the discourses on inner purity and pollution, like those on outer purity and pollution, lack absolute uniformity. That said, the language employed to encapsulate notions of inner and outer purity demonstrates a degree of consistency, and there are certain shared tendencies in the conceptualization of inner purity and pollution. In this section we provide, in the form of tables, an overview of terms used to designate inner purity and pollution in literary sources from Hesiod to Euripides and in the gold leaves. After this, in the section 'Continuities', we proceed to compare this language with the terminology employed in the epigraphic evidence. We have isolated the seats of inner purity and pollution, and the qualifiers used to depict it. We provide references to ritual context and, where possible, means of obtaining purity. Under the heading 'duration', we specify 'temporary' if it is clear

[15] For a brief overview of research on implicit and explicit beliefs, Lanman 2008: 54–5.
[16] In this context, we use the tilde ~ to mean 'equals approximately'.

from the context that inner purity needs to be obtained for the performance of the ritual. In these cases the consequences of purity are not directly outlined, and it is implied that inner purity is the prerequisite for correct performance of a ritual and contributes to ritual efficacy. In some cases only the consequences of inner impurity are outlined; these are most commonly divine anger and hubris. Occasionally, however, the consequences of purity are also specified. This tends to be the case when purity is either more extreme than usual (*Hippolytus*) or more lasting (a permanent state, such as in *Hippolytus*, *Electra*, or the *Bacchae*), or a result of a specific purification ritual (the gold leaves).

Chapter 1. Hesiod

Works and Days provides the earliest attestation of a request for inner purity for a successful completion of a ritual, in this case the crossing of a river. In *Op*. vv. 740–1 Hesiod states that 'whoever should cross the river with badness (*kakotes*) and hands unwashed (*aniptos*), the gods resent him and afterwards give him trouble'.

The term for inner pollution Hesiod employs is *kakotes*, 'badness'. In Hesiod, 'badness' is the opposite of justice, it is the violation of social and religious norms, which provokes divine anger. The seat of badness is in Hesiod regularly the mind (*nous*), which is conceived as a dynamic entity.

Qualifier of inner impurity	**Seat**	**Ritual context**	**Means of obtaining purity**	**Duration**	**Consequence of impurity**
kakotes	*nous*	River-crossing	Prayer	Temporary	Divine anger and punishment

Chapter 2. Pythagoras

If genuine, the Pythagorean instruction about ritual purity (D.S. 10.9.6) is the earliest attestation of the request for purity of soul: 'those performing sacrifices are to approach the gods wearing not expensive clothes, but bright and clean garments; similarly they should present themselves not only with a body clean of every deed of injustice, but also with a ritually pure soul.'

Qualifier of inner purity	Seat	Ritual context	Means of obtaining purity	Duration	Consequence of impurity
hagneusa	*psyche*	Sacrifice	Not precisely specified, possibly prayer	Temporary	Not specified

Chapter 3. Heraclitus

Iamblichus quotes Heraclitus in his discussion of two types of sacrifice by two types of people (*Myst*. 5.15.13–16 = Heraclit. Fr. B 69 DK), those who are 'in the grip of their bodies' and 'those who are completely purified in every respect'. The phrase *pantapasi apokekatharmenoi anthropoi* is often taken to denote the universal, internal and external purity of the worshipper. For Heraclitus, the soul (*psyche*) was the seat of personal identity, moral character, and action, and if the whole phrase is Heraclitean, he might have had the purity of soul in mind.

Qualifiers of inner purity	Seat	Ritual context	Means of obtaining purity	Duration	Consequence of impurity
pantapasi apokekatharmenoi	*psyche*?	Sacrifice	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified

Chapter 4. Empedocles

According to Empedocles, it is the inner self, the demonic element in humanity, that is polluted, and this pollution is permanent unless one performs purifications. In order to escape the cycle of grievous transformations, humans must abstain from murder, which Empedocles interprets to mean the killing of any life form. Consequently, Empedocles prohibits sacrifice, calling it killing/murder (*phonos*) and the greatest pollution (*mysos megiston*, Fr. B 128 DK). By adopting Empedocles' way of life, humans will abstain from *kakotes* (moral badness) and will 'relieve their mind (*thymos*) from suffering' (Fr. B 145 DK).

Furthermore, inner purity is a prerequisite for encounters with the divine: in Fr. B 3 DK, Empedocles asks the gods to turn away madness, *manie* (conceptualized as mental impurity), by purifying his mouth and words, and to make his song religiously correct. In Fr. B 110 DK, he requests recipients of divine knowledge to have 'pure heed' (*katharai meletai*) in their *prapides* (~ 'mind').

Qualifiers of inner (im)purity	Seat	Ritual context	Means of obtaining purity	Duration	Consequence of impurity
mysos; *miaino*; *kakotes*	*daimon*; *thymos*	Empedoclean way of life	Essential rule: abstention from blood-spilling; further abstentions	Permanent	Suffering of the mind; inability to re-attain divine status
katharos; *manie*	*mind*	Prayer	Divine purification	Temporary?	Not specified
kathara (*melete*)	*prapides*; *merimnai*	Encounter with the divine (message)	Mental exercise (*melete*)	Permanent	'Blunt thoughts'

Chapter 5. Xenophanes

In Xenophanes' sympotic elegy (Fr. B 1 DK), ritual performers need to be *euphrones* ('of well-disposed mind', v. 13), should hymn the god with religiously correct tales and purified words (*euphemoi mythoi* and *katharoi logoi*, v. 14), and pray for the capacity to do what is just (*ta dikaia*, v. 15). In the ritual context, great importance is laid on correct inner disposition, but at its root is a permanent ('always') holding of the gods in good consideration (v. 24).

Qualifiers of inner purity	Seat	Ritual context	Means of obtaining purity	Duration	Consequence of impurity
katharos; *euphron*	*phren*?; *mind*	Sympotic rituals (including hymns, libation, and prayer)	*prometheie agathe* (personal agency)	Temporary	*Hubris*

Chapter 6. The *Theognidea*

The *Theognidea* supply evidence for the notion of inner purity and pollution in a ritual context, but inner purity is also employed broadly and metaphorically

to signify adherence to an aristocratic moral code. In the latter context (vv. 447–52), the term *katharos* denotes a permanent, general, morally based inner purity as a distinctive trait of aristocrats. In the ritual context of a sympotic prayer to Apollo (vv. 759–60), inner purity is a temporary state. We argue that the prayer to Apollo is a prayer for purification of the *nous*, which is envisaged as the seat of morality. It is through imagery of straightness and crookedness of *nous* in combination with references to the god of purity and language of purity that the *Theognidea* define the correct ritual disposition and a general moral correctness: *orthos* and *katharos nous* is in Theognis explicitly associated with ideas of righteousness, justice, and sincerity in both social and religious contexts. We summarize only those expressions relating to the ritual context.

Qualifiers of inner purity	Seat	Ritual context	Means of obtaining purity	Duration	Consequence of impurity
orthos	*nous*	Sympotic rituals	Prayer	Temporary	Not specified

Chapter 8. Aeschylus

In Aeschylus the most common seat of inner pollution is *phren*. Bad thinking in the context of a number of rituals is conceptualized as inner pollution, which is expressed in distinct ritual terms. Among these, *dysagnos*, *anagnos*, *anieros*, and *miasma* are closely associated with the inner self of a transgressive ritual actor. In the *Oresteia*, madness as a form of inner pollution resulting from a murderous act plays a pivotal role.

Oresteia

Qualifiers of inner impurity	Seat	Ritual context	Means of obtaining purity	Duration	Consequence of impurity
anagnos; *anieros*; *dyssebes*	*phren*	Human sacrifice of Iphigenia	Not specified	Not specified	Transgressive ritual; blasphemy; Agamemnon's death as *miasmaton apoina*

(*continued*)

Qualifiers of inner impurity	Seat	Ritual context	Means of obtaining purity	Duration	Consequence of impurity
epimainetai; *miasma kai theon stygos*	*phren*, *phronema*	Murder of Agamemnon staged as a sacrifice	Purification of the house by the killing of the polluted murderers	Permanent madness, night terrors	Clytaemestra killed by Orestes as an act of the purification of the house (*pan elase mysos katharmoisin atan elateriois*)
lyssa; night-terrors; mental derangement; *miasma*; *azela…miasmata*; *dysarktoi phrenes*; Erinyes; *taragmos es phrenes pitnei*; *theomyses; phobos*; *parakopa*; *parafora*	*phren*	Purification of the house in the form of divinely ordained murder of Clytaemestra and Aegisthus staged as a sacrifice	Disputed: according to Erinyes, none; according to Apollo, Athena, and Athenians, supplication, purification by Apollo, association with people, trial	Disputed: according to Erinyes, permanent, according to Apollo and Athena, temporary	Exile; persecution by Erinyes (madness); trial

Suppliants

Qualifiers of inner impurity	Seat	Ritual context	Means of obtaining purity	Duration	Consequence of impurity
asebes; *mainolis*	*dianoia* ~ *nous*	Marriage	Not specified	Not specified	*hubris*; *enagea telea* (impure rituals)
dysagnoi; *oulophrones*; *anieros*	*phrenes*; *menos*; *metis*	Supplication; *xenia*	Not specified	Not specified	*hubris*

Chapter 9. Sophocles

Rather than focusing on the inner disposition of participants in individual rituals, Sophocles is more interested in general reflections on the merits of piety and the disastrous consequences of impiety, especially that of leaders. Both piety and impiety are associated with correct thinking about the gods, or the lack thereof. Safe thinking is juxtaposed to 'thoughts inappropriate for mortals', and the gods love 'those who think safe thoughts' and 'hate badness' (*Ajax*, vv. 132–3). Striking is his hymn to the reverent purity of all words and deeds in *Oedipus Tyrannus* (vv. 863–92), where the purity regulations are represented as divinely ordained; conversely, the all-encompassing miasma in Thebes is a disease stemming from Creon's mind (*Antigone*, v. 1015).

Chapter 10. Euripides

Issues of both inner purity and pollution play a significant role in the plots of *Hippolytus*, *Orestes*, and *Electra*, in association with a variety of ritual contexts. *Phren* (and *phronema*) are in Euripides regularly represented as seats of inner purity and pollution, with two notable exceptions: the *Bacchae* relates to the purification of *psyche* in the context of ritual *oribasia*, and *Hippolytus* to the eponymous character's *parthenos psyche*. As in Aeschylus, inner pollution is often described in distinct ritual terms, among which 'miasma of *phrenes*', along with qualifiers *anagnoi*, *ou hagnai*, and *ou katharai* (*phrenes*) occupy a prominent place. With Euripides we encounter also the formulation *hosia phronein*, 'to think religiously correct thoughts', and we find the explicit association of *synesis* ('conscience') with issues of inner purity and pollution, on both of which see the section 'Continuities'. A further distinctive feature of Euripides' language of purity is his use of *sophronein*/*sophrosyne* and related terms to qualify inner purity and/or pollution.

Hippolytus

Qualifiers of inner (im)purity	Seat	Ritual context	Means of obtaining purity	Duration	Consequence of impurity/purity
miasma	*phren*	Not specified	None, *miasma* divinely sent	Permanent	Madness, illness, death, and bodily pollution

(*continued*)

Qualifiers of inner (im)purity	Seat	Ritual context	Means of obtaining purity	Duration	Consequence of impurity/ purity
parthenos; *eusebes* and *agathe*; *sophrosyne as defined by Hippolytus*	*psyche phren;*	'Hippolytean way of life'; access to the sacred meadow; ritual plucking of flowers; dedication; exceptional proximity to the divinity ~ divine encounters	Inborn; avoidance of sources of pollution (physical and metaphysical)	Permanent	Aphrodite's *agos* and apotheosis
kakoi	*phrenes*?	Access to the sacred meadow, and ritual plucking of flowers	None; purity is inborn.	Permanent	Prohibition of access and engagement within sacred space
anagnos	*phren*	Curse	Absolution by the victim	Temporary	Anger of the gods
ou kathara	*phren*	Not specified	Not specified	Temporary?	Anger against the gods

Orestes

Qualifiers of inner (im)purity	Seat	Ritual context	Means of obtaining purity	Duration	Consequence of impurity
ou hagnai	*phrenes*	Handling of lustral vessels (libations) and pre-battle sacrifices	Not specified	Inconclusive	Unsuitability to rule and perform rituals on behalf of the community
nosos; *mania*; *phobos*; *Erinyes*; *lyssa*; *miasma*; *synesis* (of *ta deina*)	*phrenes*	None; consequence of kin-killing	Supplication; divine intervention	Temporary	According to the citizens of Argos: death-sentence; according to Apollo: year-long exile; trial

Electra

Qualifiers of inner (im)purity	Seat	Ritual context	Means of obtaining purity	Duration	Consequence of impurity/ purity
ou hosia phronein/ hosia phronein	*phronema/ phren*	Kin-killing conceptualized as sacrifice; violation of supplication	Remorse and self-reproach	Temporary	Murder/social reintegration
mysaroi	Not specified	Soteriological epiphany	Avoidance of *adikia* and perjury	Permanent	Lack of divine assistance
hosia kai dikaia philon echein	Not specified	Soteriological epiphany	Avoidance of *adikia* and perjury	Permanent	Divine assistance; salvation

Bacchae

Qualifiers of inner purity	Seat	Ritual context	Means of obtaining purity	Duration	Consequence of purity
(*biotan*) *hagisteuein*	*psyche*	*oribasia*; *thiaseuein*	*oribasia*; *hosioi katharmoi*	Permanent	*euagein*; *eudaimonia*

Chapter 11. Aristophanes

In contrast to tragedy, comedy displays little interest in purity beliefs. In *Frogs* we encounter a request for purity of thoughts (*kathara gnome*) formulated as a paraphrase of the *prorrhesis* of the Eleusinian mysteries in a quasi-ritual context.

Qualifiers of inner (im)purity	Seat	Ritual context	Means of obtaining purity	Duration	Consequence of inner purity
(me) kathareuein	*gnome*	'mysteries'; 'initiation'	Not specified	Temporary?	Participation in dances of the initiates/ eschatological bliss

Chapter 12. The Gold Leaves

The four 'Orphic' gold leaves we analysed imply purity of *psyche* which, in the context of audience with Persephone in the underworld, either proclaims or is proclaimed to be *kathara*, coming from or descending from a group of *katharoi*. When analysed within the framework of 'Orphic' beliefs, the purity acquired by the worshippers during their lifetime represents a 'permission to engage' which is valid in Hades and serves as a facilitator of the soul's blessed existence in the underworld.

Qualifiers of inner purity	**Seat**	**Ritual context**	**Means of obtaining purity**	**Duration**	**Consequence of inner purity**
kathara	*psyche* (implied)	Audience with Persephone in the underworld	Initiation	Permanent, extending into afterlife.	Eschatological bliss

SEATS AND QUALIFIERS

From this overview it follows that the four most common seats of inner purity or pollution, according to the number of attestations, are *phren* (and related terms), *psyche*, *nous*, and *gnome*. The earliest attested seat of inner purity is *nous*, as we argue in our discussion of Hesiod; before tragedy one notes parallel use of *nous* and *psyche*. The tragedians, however, display a remarkable uniformity in their prevailing conception of *phren* as the seat of purity and impurity; when they do use different terms, as, for instance, Euripides does for Hippolytus and the Bacchants, or Aeschylus for the Aegyptids, then they seem to be doing so in a marked way. It is impossible to ascertain whether Heraclitus had *psyche* in mind as a seat of purity. In Empedocles we observe highly idiosyncratic ideas about anthropogony, and relatedly a vocabulary which stands out from the rest of the evidence and seems to construct a hermetic subsystem insulated from the mainstream: his use of *daimon* for the inner self is assimilated to *psyche* by his later commentators and readers, but his other terms denoting the seat of purity and impurity seem to be associated exclusively with his ideas (*prapides*, *merimnai*, *thymos*). Conversely, the evidence of tragedy seems to refer to a discourse on inner purity and pollution that was well established by the fifth century BC, which had *phren*/*phronein* (and related terms) as its focal point.

Psyche as a seat of inner purity and pollution is attested in Diodorus' quotation of a Pythagorean *symbolon*, in Euripides' *Hippolytus* and the *Bacchae*, and, implicitly, in the evidence of the gold leaves. This evidence suggests that the use of the term *psyche* as a seat of inner purity seems to be coupled with eschatological hopes, or at least to imply some sort of continuation of life after death. Hippolytus claims a *parthenos psyche*, and is deified upon his death; Pythagoras' preference for this term could be related to his ideas concerning the transmigration of the *psyche*; in the *Bacchae* the term points towards Bacchic *teletai*; and in the evidence of the gold leaves, it is the soul of the deceased that claims purity in order to acquire eschatological bliss.

In some cases a precise differentiation is made between bodily and inner purity.[17] Hesiod distinguishes between the purity of hands and *nous*, Pythagoras between the body and *psyche*, Xenophanes between the pure hands and the state of being *euphron*. The *Theognidea*, however, do not lay an emphasis on purity of body, but construct instead a distinction between the tongue and speech (*glossa*) and the mind (*nous*). The dichotomy between mind and tongue is further sharpened in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, where the eponymous character postulates the parallel existence of *glossa* and *phren* as separate ritual agents by exclaiming that his tongue has sworn an oath but his mind did not (v. 612). Euripides seems to be fond of drawing sharp dichotomies between the purity and impurity of mind and body, and twice in his tragedies we encounter a paradox of the one being pure and the other impure: Phaedra and Menelaus have pure hands, but impure minds.[18] We argue that, by so doing, Euripides raises awareness of the importance of the mind as a ritual agent, and emphasizes the importance of its purity with particular urgency. In Aeschylus' *Oresteia* some degree of separation of mind and body with regard to impurity seems to be implied too, as it is Orestes' mind that remains impure even after the purification of his body from homicidal miasma. The anatomy of inner pollution is most complicated in Empedocles' thought. His *daimon* is initially demoted from a god due to a physical pollution by murder, coupled with a grave metaphysical pollution of breaking an oath. In the cycle of the *daimon*'s metamorphoses into different bodily shapes on earth, however, it is the inner self, the daemonic part of the living creature, that is still treated as polluted by the elements. This inner pollution, coupled with blood-shedding, results in further pollutions. Finally, what we can gather about 'Orphic' beliefs on the basis of the gold leaves seems to imply that it is the psyche that needs to be purified first and foremost. Of course, the context of our evidence is such that we cannot conclude much about the implications of bodily pollution, since it is only the

[17] On this differentiation in Greek anthropology and the sacred regulations, see Chaniotis 1997. On the body and soul in general, Böhme 1929 remains useful; see Bremmer 1983 and 2010 for a general discussion.

[18] Phaedra in *Hippolytus*, v. 317 and Menelaus in *Orestes*, v. 1604.

soul that outlives the body and expects an audience with Persephone in the underworld.

As we shall in the section 'Continuities', the inscriptional evidence, too, often constructs a differentiation between purity of body (usually encapsulated in a reference to hands, *cheires*[19]) and inner purity, thus implying a separation between the two.

As for the qualifiers, that is, the terms which denote the purity or pollution of the inner self, it is noteworthy that the earliest of our sources construct the diametric opposition of purity and *kakotes*, 'badness', which comprises inner impurity from Hesiod onwards. In the evidence associated with aristocratic circles, *kakos* maintains its meaning as 'impure', and the *Theognidea* overtly juxtaposes the purity of a true *agathos* to the dangerous and contagious social and religious impurity of the *kakoi*. Similarly, Hippolytus formulates the rules of access to the sacred precinct of Artemis which explicitly exclude *kakoi*, and constructs the opposition between the *kakoi* and those who are in possession of an inborn purity.

The term *hagnos*, which denotes ritual purity of the worshipper, is related to both inner purity and inner pollution in a number of passages, both on its own and in related expressions. The soul 'pursuing purity', *hagneusa psyche*, is in Pythagoras associated with the worshipper's inner investment in the moment of ritual sacrifice, and coupled with abstinence from 'unjust deeds'. Conversely, the failure to acknowledge the power of gods, an incorrect attitude towards a ritual, or an intention to disrespect the rules of the ritual is qualified as contrary to being *hagnos*: this is valid for Agamemnon's *phren anagnos* at sacrifice, the Aegyptids' *dysagnoi phrenes* at supplication and intended marriage, Theseus' *phren anagnos* with a curse, and Menelaus' *phrenes ou hagnai* with supplication.

Kathairo occurs in Heraclitus to designate complete purity (if the fragment is genuine). *Katharos* as an adjective is coupled with *logoi* in Xenophanes and *nous* in Theognis, while in the gold leaves it relates to the *psyche*. In *Hippolytus* the *phren* of the chorus is not *kathara*, and in *Frogs gnome* is not purified, *me kathareuein*. The verb and the adjective seem to be used in a wide span of meanings, extending from *euphemia*, to values such as honesty, to correct thinking about the gods, without being specifically associated with a particular seat or action.

Anieros is used twice by Aeschylus, once with *phren* and once with *menos*, but in both cases to express incorrect inner disposition towards the ritual, which is also characterized as impious mental disposition, *asebes dianoia*, in the *Suppliants*.

[19] As Chaniotis 1997: 150 n. 13 points out ,'die Hand kommt … laufend vor, stellvertretend für den äußeren Menschen, stellvertretend für den ganzen Körper. Die unreine Hand steht immer im Gegensatz zu der unreinen Seele, zu den unreinen Gedanken.'

Imagery of correctness and straightness is closely associated with ideas of purity, while its opposite, crookedness, is assimilated to impurity in the *Theognidea*. A prayer for an *orthos nous* amounts to a request for purity which qualifies the honesty and piety of the *agathoi*, who are in possession of a *katharos nous*.

In *Hippolytus* the adjectives *parthenos* and *eusebes* are used to designate the eponymous characters' *psyche* and *phren* respectively, and in both cases the usual meaning of the terms is stretched to encompass inner purity—in the case of *parthenos* in the sense of the complete absence of interest in sex and sexuality, in the case of *eusebes* in the sense of an all-encompassing purity which even enables Hippolytus to purify his father's *phren* by absolving him of all guilt.

Madness is a particular form of impurity of mind and it is qualified with a particularly rich vocabulary, some of which directly mirrors the categories of purity and pollution. We encounter it in Empedocles as '*mania* of others', which the gods are asked to remove from the speaker's mind in the process of its purification. In the *Oresteia* the homicides Clytaemestra and Orestes are affected by *mania* as a form of inner impurity immediately after the act of killing; it affects the *phren* as *lyssa*, *phobos*, and mental derangement (*dysarktoi phrenes*); the Erinyes as visible agents of pollution threaten to inflict on Orestes' mind a permanent *parakopa*, *paraphora*, *taragmos*, and *phobos*. This type of pollution outlasts the physical taint of blood and resists purification. Euripides' Orestes, in the eponymous play, suffers from the same type of inner pollution, which is characterized as *nosos*, *mania*, *phobos*, *Erinyes*, *lyssa*, *miasma*, and *synesis* of *ta deina*.

In *Hippolytus*, however, madness is a form of inner pollution which is not a direct consequence of a murder or some other terrible deed; it is divinely sent by Aphrodite, who inflicts upon Phaedra a madness which is variously described as miasma of the *phren*, *nosos*, *mainein*, *parakopa*, and *planos phrenon.*

Finally, the phrase *hosia phronein* from Euripides' *Electra* deserves special mention, as it will play a very important role in the normative language of Greek sacred regulations and is closely associated with the right of access to Greek sanctuaries from the early fourth century BC onwards. To 'think religiously correct thoughts' will be articulated as the guarantor of divine protection, divine assistance, and healing, as we are about to see.

CONTINUITIES: EARLY CONCEPTS OF INNER PURITY AND POLLUTION AND GREEK SACRED REGULATIONS

The inscriptional evidence will be adduced and analysed in more detail in Volume II. Nevertheless, in these concluding remarks we wish to briefly

point out a number of continuities and overlaps in thought and expression between the literary evidence we have explored and the epigraphic sources dealing with Greek ritual and religion. In the Greek world, the earliest attempts to provide normative texts for ritual, the texts once known as '*leges sacrae*' and now referred to as ritual norms or sacred regulations, are dated to the sixth century BC. Their number increases with development of local epigraphic habits, and while there is a number of such texts from the Classical period, the vast majority of surviving evidence stems from the Hellenistic period and first two centuries of the Imperial period, while their numbers decline after the third century AD. These texts are widely spread, and we find them from Tomi on the Black Sea in the north; via Macedonia, central Greece, and the Greek islands, including Crete, to Upper Egypt in the south; and from Adıyaman Province in south-east Turkey, over central Anatolia, to the western tip of Sicily in the west. Greater numbers of finds are associated with sites of greater ritual activity (and a developed epigraphic habit): Athens, Delphi, Delos, Cos, and the cities of Caria are particularly rich suppliers of these texts.[20]

The sacred regulations deal with a great many aspects of ritual, and among these a special category of texts is concerned with issues of purity and pollution. In antiquity, texts prescribing the cathartic policies of a sanctuary were often referred to as *programmata*, as a passage from Lucian demonstrates. Commenting on preparations for blood-sacrifice, Lucian notes: 'the *programma* states that no one is to pass the lustral basin who is not clean of hands.'[21] Hence, *programma*, along with its cognates (especially *prographe*; *prographo*), was one of the emic terms Greeks employed for religious regulations specifying the conditions of entry to a sanctuary. These texts were particularly concerned with issues of access and the conditions under which one was deemed *hagnos*.[22] *Programmata* appear to have been vested with some sort of formal authority: in some sources, especially lexicographers, the term is equated to *ekthema*, that is, an edict or proclamation; with *prostaxis*, an order issued by a king and set up in a public space; or, more generally, with the term *nomos* (law).[23] By late antiquity the *programma* is also

[20] On this, Carbon and Pirenne-Delforge 2012 and A. Petrovic 2015.

[21] *Sacr.* 13: *καὶ τὸ μὲν πρόγραμμά φησι μὴ παριέναι εἰς τὸ εἴσω τῶν περιρραντηρίων ὅστις μὴ καθαρός ἐστιν τὰς χεῖρας*. On *programmata*, cf. Sokolowski's commentary on *LSS* 59, p. 114, *LSS* 91, pp. 160–1, and cf. *LSAM* 20, ll. 31–32 with reference to *ta progegrammena*, and *LSAM* 68, with commentary on l. 1, p. 161 (Zingerle's conjecture appears to be correct; Sokolowski evidently recognized his error by the time he published *LSS*, seven years after *LSAM*), and Lupu 2009: 14–18.

[22] On these texts, see Parker 1983, Chaniotis 1997 and 2012, Robertson 2013, and Petrovic and Petrovic 2016.

[23] Hesychius, s.v. *προγράμματα· ἐκθέματα*; Ps.-Zonaras, s.v. *πρόθεμα· τὸ πρόγραμμα· τουτέστιν ἡ ἐκ βασιλέως πρόσταξις ἐγγράφως δημοσίᾳ ἀνατιθεμένη*; Sch. in Aristophanem, *Av*. 450b: *ἐν τοῖς πινακίοις προγράμμασιν· ἐν τοῖς νόμοις*. *Programmata* are attested in urban and extra-urban sanctuaries, but also in natural places of worship, such as grottoes: two are known from caves

used more broadly, for inscriptions on the gates of sanctuaries and on temple façades such as the famous ancient maxim from Delphi, *gnothi sauton*.[24]

Epigraphic records preserve around forty texts which can be classed as either entry regulations in general, inscriptions of other genres which also refer to purity regulations, or entry-cum-cathartic regulations concerned with rights of access to the *temenos* or participation in cult.[25] The earliest of the surviving cathartic regulations come from the fifth century BC, and they tend to be concise, often comprising one or two lines, and as a rule pertain to prohibitions or exclusions (ethnic, gender, objects, absolute), rather than abstention from contact with sources of pollution.[26]

The earliest more elaborate text, containing precisely formulated periods of abstentions (*hagneiai*), is the fourth-century BC regulation from Metropolis in Ionia which pertains to the cult of a mother-goddess, Meter Gallesia (*LSAM* 29). Already this text combines cathartic concerns with morality, and in particular, an interest in just behaviour (*dikaia*): alongside concerns relating to physical pollution (sex and death), the text displays anxiety about major metaphysical pollution and prohibits the dragging away of suppliants from the altars and 'doing anything unjust'. In the case of a transgression the text threatens the perpetrator with *agos*, stating that Meter Gallesia will not be merciful to anyone who commits unjust deeds.[27]

associated with the Nymphs and Pan and with the Nymphs respectively (*LSAM* 82, vicinity of Amaseia, Pontus, inscribed on the doorjambs of the gates to the grotto of the Nymphs, Imperial period, cf. ll. 5–7, and *NGSL* no. 4, Marathon, Cave of Pan, first century BC); cf. *LSS* 34. Cf. use of *praescriptio* in legal contexts, *OLD*, s.v.

[24] Agathias Scholasticus, *Historiae* 5.4–5: *ἀλλ' ἕπεσθαι τῷ Δελφικῷ ἐκείνῳ προγράμματι καὶ τὰ οἰκεῖα γιγνώσκειν*.

[25] For the full dossier, see Petrovic and Petrovic 2016.

[26] Cf. *LSCG* 109: entry regulation inscribed on a boundary-stone, fifth century BC, Paros, cult of Zeus Hypatos, banning women and the uninitiated from the precinct; *LSCG* 110: fragmentary entry regulation, or regulation concerning participation in cult of Demeter and Kore, inscribed on a column, second half of the fifth century BC, Paros, determining that Dorians are not allowed into the precinct or to participate in a festival of Damoia; *LSCG* 121: entry regulation to an unidentifiable precinct, Chios, date unclear, banning visitors from entering altogether: 'Sanctuary. No entry.'; *IG* II² 4964 Athenian Acropolis, cult of Zeus Kataibates, 400–350 BC: 'A sacred space of Zeus Kataibates, not to be entered', with Lupu 2009: 20–1 and Graf 2010: 62–3. Sokolowski suggests (on *LSS* 128, see below) that such sanctuaries were open for visitors only on certain festival days; cf. also *SEG* LVI 998, with a similar regulation coming from Chios (late fifth/early fourth century BC) stating, [*Ἐ*]*πίσχε·* | [*μ*]*ὴ πλέον*; 'Hold back. No farther!'; *LSS* 49: Delos, fifth century BC, cult of Archegetes: entry regulation inscribed on a door lintel which stood on the doors either to the *escharon* or the *abaton*, according to Sokolowski (*ad loc.*): 'It is not religiously correct for a foreigner to enter', and cf. *SEG* XLIV 678; *LSS* 60, Minoa on Amorgos, fifth or fourth century BC: a fragmentary regulation apparently forbidding entry with iron objects to the sanctuary of Apollo Delios; *LSS* 128: entry regulation, forbidding entry altogether, Kallion in Etolia, fifth century BC, unclear whose sanctuary: 'Do not enter the sanctuary. Should someone trespass, a fine of four staters.'

[27] *LSAM* 29, ll. 8–15 with Sokolowski's commentary and apparatus and *I.Ephesos* 3401: [*ἱκέτην*] *μὴ ἀπέλκειν* [*βωμοῖς*] *ἐπιστά*[*μενο*]*ν μηδὲ* [*δρᾶν*] *μ*[*η*]*θὲν ἄδι*[*κον·*] *ὅς δ'* [*ἂν*] *ἀδική*[*σῃ,*] *μὴ εἵλως αὐ*[*τῷ ἡ*] *Μήτηρ* [*ἡ*] *Γαλ*[*λησί*]*α*.

Both Robert Parker and Angelos Chaniotis observe that issues of morality become an object of ritual norms from the fourth century BC onwards.[28] Chaniotis, who was the first to gather and analyse much of the material adduced in this section,[29] posits that it was the impact of legal distinctions in homicide law highlighting the role of intentionality, and the differentiated attitude towards an afterlife, that influenced ritual norms to include references to inner disposition alongside physical requirements.[30]

Inscribed messages formulated as maxims and addressing worshippers from the temple façades and educating them in issues of virtue and morality seem even older. Apart from the much-repeated (chanted, as Pausanias says) Delphic maxims 'know thyself' and 'nothing in excess', *gnothi sauton* and *meden agan*, inscribed in the *pronaos* of Apollo's sanctuary, and understood as personal dedications of the Seven Sages,[31] Aristotle avers that the *propylaea* of the Letoon (Leto's temple) on Delos, too, had a verse-inscription telling the visitor: 'What is most just is most beautiful, and the best thing is to be sound, but most delightful of all is to get what you wish for.'[32]

From the early fourth century BC, it seems, moralizing messages incorporating the concepts and expressions we have discussed throughout this book, and summed up in the section dedicated to the language of inner purity and pollution, have found their way also into the cathartic regulations. This can be observed for the seats of inner purity and pollution, the qualifiers, and the general concepts.

It is with a general concept that we start. Apart from the general ban on 'things unjust' or concerns with metaphysical pollution such as we have just observed in the text from the sanctuary of Meter Gallesia, we find increasing numbers of explicit references to inner purity and pollution. Among these, particularly current and long-lived was the concept of 'thinking religiously correct thoughts', *hosia phronein*. Euripides' repenting Electra was, as we saw above, addressed by the chorus stating that, once she developed the conscience of her deed, her thinking had changed and became religiously correct, whereas this had not been the case before: *φρονεῖς γὰρ ὅσια νῦν τότ' οὐ / φρονοῦσα* (vv. 1203–4). The same phrase, *hosia phronein*, is attested in the Epidaurian *programma*, which was carved either somewhere on the temple façade, or perhaps on the gates of the sanctuary at some point between 400 and 390 BC, a few decades after *Electra*'s première.[33] Here, the role of *phronein* comes to the fore, as it is *hagneia* that is defined as *phronein hosia*:

[28] Parker 1983: 322–7, Chaniotis 1997: 154–5 and 2012: 130–1. On Bremmer's 2002 late dating of the Epidaurian text, see 'Belief and Inner Purity' in the Introduction chapter (p. 6 n. 16).

[29] 1997, followed by Bremmer 2002, Petrovic and Petrovic 2006, and Robertson 2013.

[30] Chaniotis 2012: 128–9, and 'Belief and Inner Purity' in the Introduction chapter (pp. 4–8).

[31] Pl. *Chrm.* 164d3–165a7; in pronaos: Paus. 10.24.1.

[32] *κάλλιστον τὸ δικαιότατον, λῷστον δ' ὑγιαίνειν, πάντων ἥδιστον δ' οὗ τις ἐρᾷ τὸ τυχεῖν.* Arist. *EE* 1214a = *Theognidea* 255–6; cf. Arist. *EN* 1099a 25–9.

[33] For dating of the temple and the lettering 'on the temple', Prignitz 2014, and Introduction, n. 16.

> ἁγνὸν χρὴ ναοῖο θυώδεος ἐντὸς ἰόντα
> ἔμμεναι· ἁγνείη δ' ἐστὶ φρονεῖν ὅσια.
>
> He who goes inside the sweet smelling temple must be pure.
> Purity is to think religiously correct thoughts.[34]

The same concept, *hosia phronein*, appears also in the Delian *Sarapis Aretalogy*, inscribed in the third century BC on a short free-standing column and placed in the courtyard of the Sarapeion, about 300 metres away from the Letoon's message quoted by Aristotle and mentioned above. The visitor to the Sarapeion was informed that Isis and Sarapis (ll. 33–4) 'always come as saviours to the morally good people (*esthloi*) who in every situation think *hosia* in their mind (*nous*)', ἐσθλοῖσιν δὲ σαώτορες αἰὲν ἕπεσθε / ἀνδράσιν οἳ κατὰ πάντα νόῳ ὅσια φρονέουσιν.[35] Thus, in the inscriptional evidence of the third century BC we find *nous* 'thinking religiously correct thoughts' closely associated with the moral goodness of the *esthloi*, and reminiscent of the notions we observed in Hesiod, Xenophanes, Theognis, and of the speech of Castor in Euripides' *Electra*, where the soteriological epiphany is predicated on the moral goodness of those in the predicament.

The longevity of the concept and its direct association with purity is attested by another *programma*, from the sanctuary of either Sarapis or Asclepius in Mytilene. This text expresses the same idea as the Epidaurian text, but it does so in the late Hellenistic period (*LSS* 82): ἁγνὸν πρὸς τέμενος στείχειν ὅσια φρονέοντα ('The one who thinks religiously correct thoughts may proceed to the sanctuary as pure').[36] Furthermore, in the first century AD Plutarch associates the request to worshippers to think *hosia* with a request for *euphemia* when they consult an oracle, evidently referring to a *prorrhesis* or a *programma*: τῷ μὲν εἰς τὸ χρηστήριον ἐνταῦθα κατιόντι παρεγγυῶμεν ὅσια φρονεῖν, εὔφημα λέγειν, 'we instruct those who come down to consult the oracle here to think religiously correct thoughts and to speak *euphema*'.[37]

In fact, the insistence on *euphemia* which we explored repeatedly in the early material in conjunction with the notion of inner purity, and especially so in Xenophanes and the *Theognidea*, is also represented in epigraphic material. A Cretan *programma* from the temple of Megale Mater in Phaestus defines *hagneia* as a state achieved by being *eusebes* and *euglossos*, displaying 'proper respect for the gods' and being 'good-of-tongue', and with the latter, *euphemia* is meant. This metrical text comes from the second century BC

[34] Porphyry, *De abstinentia* 2.19 = Clem. Al., *Strom*. 5.1.13.3.

[35] Delian *Sarapis Aretalogy*, XI, 4 1299, see Engelmann 1975: 2; and Moyer 2011. See also our discussion of Euripides' *Electra* in Ch. 10 (p. 235).

[36] On the identity of the god: Robertson 2013: 231; date: Carbon and Pirenne-Delforge 2012: 176 with n. 59.

[37] Plu. 378c–d (*De Iside et Osiride* 68).

(possibly earlier[38]); it is carved on a *tabula ansata* and placed in front of the sanctuary, and promises great but (unfortunately for us) mysterious rewards for the pure visitors (vv. 4–6): *πάντες δ' εὐσεβίες τε καὶ εὔγλωθ{ι}οι πάριθ' ἁγνοὶ ἔνθεον ἐς Μεγάλας Ματρὸς ναόν, ἔνθεα δ' ἔργα γνωσῆθ' ἀθανάτας ἄξια τῶδε ναῶ*, 'all of you who are *eusebeis* and *euglossoi* proceed inside as pure (*hagnoi*), into the divine temple of Megale Mater, and you will learn divine deeds of the goddess, worthy of this temple.'[39]

Nous as a seat of inner purity is attested in a number of epigraphic sources, but most remarkably so in a cathartic-cum-entry regulation of the first century AD (*LSS* 108.4–7) from a Rhodian sanctuary of (presumably) Sarapis:

> *ἁγνὸν χρὴ ναοῖο θ[υ]ώδεος ἐντὸς ἰόντ[α]*
> *ἔνμεναι· οὐ λουτροῖ[ς][40] ἀλλὰ νόῳ καθαρόν.*
>
> He who goes inside the sweet smelling temple must be pure (*hagnos*):
> not by washing, but pure (*katharos*) in mind (*nous*).

Chaniotis recently remarked that this entry regulation combines two texts in two lines: the hexameter and the first word of the pentameter are literal quotations of the Epidaurian *programma* we mentioned above, while the rest of the pentameter displays significant similarities with a text presumably from yet another sanctuary of Sarapis. As in the case of the Cretan *programma* for the cult of Meter Gallesia, this text combines notions of *hagneia* and *euphemia*:[41]

> *ἁγνὰς χεῖρας ἔχων καὶ νοῦν καὶ γλῶτταν ἀληθῆ*
> *εἴσ<ι>θι, μὴ λοετροῖς, ἀλλὰ νόῳ καθαρός·*
> *ἀρκεῖ γάρ θ' ὁσίοις ῥανὶς ὕδατος· ἄνδρα δὲ φαῦλον*
> *οὐδ' ἂν ὁ πᾶς λούσαι κεύμασιν ὠκεανός.*
>
> With pure hands and mind (*nous*), and with a truthful tongue,
> come in, not through washing, but pure in mind (*nous*):
> since, for those who are religiously correct, a drop of water suffices,
> but the entire ocean with its waves cannot wash a bad man.

[38] See Levi 1921: 371, who argues that the present stone contains a republication of an older text.

[39] *I.Cret*. I XXIII 3 (Phaestus); Chaniotis 1997: 154–5 and 2012:130–1 convincingly argues that this text attests tendencies associated with moral purity ('sittliche Reinheit'). *Hagnoi* in line 4 is appositional; cf. for the same use *LSS* 91.1 with Petrovic and Petrovic 2016. For a rich and insightful discussion of the Cretan *programma*, see Tzifopoulos 2010: 40–3 (text, translation, dating) and 205–8 for the religious context; and for linguistic analysis Martínez Fernández 2006, no. 23.

[40] Our reading *λουτροῖ[ς]* instead of Accame's *λουτροῖ* and Sokolowski's *λουτρῶι* is based on inspection of Accame's 1938 photograph.

[41] Chaniotis 2012: 132–3. Totti 1985, no. 61. Cf. Accame 1938: 74–8.

Psyche, too, appears in the Hellenistic period as a seat of inner purity in the inscriptional sacred regulations.[42] The Delian sanctuary of Zeus Kynthios and Athena Kynthia has its *programma* of the second century BC[43] welcome visitors with a request to (*LSS* 59.10–14): *ἰέναι εἰς τὸ ἱερ[ὸν τοῦ] Διὸς τοῦ Κυνθίου [καὶ τῆ]ς Ἀθηνᾶς τῆς Κυνθί[ας χε]ρσὶν καὶ ψυχῇ καθα[ρᾷ]* ('Enter the sanctuary of Zeus Kynthios and Athena Kynthia with hands and soul pure'). Five centuries later, in a third-century AD republication of an older text, we also find *psyche* clearly denoted as the seat of inner purity. The text comes from the Lindian sanctuary of Athena, and stipulates (*LSS* 91.4–5) that visitors should be *[ἀ]πὸ παντὸς ἐναγοῦς, ἀνάγνου, ἀθέσμου, μὴ τὸ [σῶ]μα μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν κεκαθαρμένους* ('purified from causes of divine wrath (*agos*), from causes of pollution (*anagnos*) and transgression, not only in respect to their body, but also to their soul').[44]

Some of the inscriptional texts combine multiple seats of inner purity. A superb example of such a practice is supplied by *SEG* XLIII 710 (= *SGO* 01/17/01). This spectacular *programma* from Carian Euromos, regulating entry to the sanctuary of Zeus Lepsynos (dated to Hadrian's reign), combines *phren*, *psyche*, and *nous* with notions of cultivation of justice and religious correctness:[45]

εἰ καθαράν, ὦ ξεῖνε, φέρεις φρένα καὶ τὸ δίκα[ι]ον
ἤσκηκες ψυχῇ, βα[ῖ]νε κατ' εὐίερον·
εἰ δ' ἀδίκων ψαύεις καί σοι νόος οὐ καθαρεύει,
πόρρω ἀπ' ἀθανάτων [ἔ]ργεο καὶ τεμένους·
οὐ στέργει φαύλους [ἱ]ερὸς δόμος, ἀλλὰ κολάζει, (5)
τοῖς δ' ὁσίοις [ὁ]σίους ἀντινέμει [χάριτας]

If you bring a pure mind (*phren*), stranger, and if in your soul (*psyche*) justice you have practised, come to this place of sanctity.
But if you engage with the unjust and if your mind (*nous*) is not pure,
off with you from the gods' ritual and sanctuary.
The holy house has no love for those who are bad (*phauloi*), it castigates them instead,
but to those who are religiously correct, it bestows equal thanks.

[42] We deal with the literary attestations of *programmata*, including *psyche* as a seat of inner purity, in Vol. II. Here we just list some of the evidence: AP XIV, 71.1–2, 'pure…in respect to your soul' and AP XIV, 74.3–4, 'bathing of the body will never purge the filth of your soul'.

[43] The text is of the second century BC or even earlier; *pace* Bremmer 2002: 107 n. 11, 'beginning of the third century AD…the inscription itself will be somewhat earlier, as it has been re-inscribed'. It was indeed reinscribed to replace the damaged stele (*LSS* 59.7–10), but in the late second century BC—see Bruneau 1970: 229: 'il vaut mieux retenir le complément proposé par A. Plassart [*Σαραπί*]*ωνος*, donc 116/5.' 116/115 BC represents a *terminus ante quem*, see Petrovic and Petrovic 2016 for a full discussion of the date.

[44] See Petrovic and Petrovic 2016 for the discussion of the text, and the date. On the soul as a seat of piety and its close association with purity, see *LSCG* 55, ll. 11–12, '*haple psyche*', with Kloppenborg and Ascough 2011: 262–77.

[45] For a discussion of this text, see Chaniotis 2012: 131.

Kathara phren and *nous katharos*, both of which we have observed in the literary evidence, in particular in the words of the chorus in Euripides' *Hippolytus* and in the *Theognidea*, are attested in this *programma*. *Psyche* as seat of justice is at Euromos inextricably connected with the notion of inner purity, since those who (v. 3) 'engage with the unjust' have a polluted *nous*. Such people are *phauloi*, and subject to punishment, effectively, they are in *agos*. *Hosiotes*, on the other hand, is in this text defined as predicated exclusively on worshippers' inner disposition.[46]

Thus far we have demonstrated continuity for three out of four of the most common seats of inner purity and pollution we identified in the literary evidence, and we have just inspected a *programma* featuring simultaneously *phren*, *psyche*, and *nous*. Let us turn to *gnome*, that we saw featured in Aristophanes (and closely associated with *ta dikaia* in the *Theognidea*). In the cult of Lindian Sarapis, a second-century AD *programma* states that, in order to get auspicious (*αἰσίως*) access to the sanctuary, the 'first and the most important' requirement is that the visitors be clean of hands and thoughts (*gnome*):[47] *πρῶτον μὲν καὶ τὸ μέγιστον· χεῖρας καὶ γνώμην καθαρούς*. After this the text turns to a request for physical abstentions, but it introduces them with the phrase 'and the (following) external concerns' (v. 8 *καὶ τὰ ἐκτός*), thus distinguishing between a primary and a secondary set of purity requirements, and clearly subordinating physical abstentions to requirements regarding purity of thought and hands, which are 'first and most important.'

The same Lindian *programma* also concerns issues of conscience interlinked with requests for inner purity. When we explored Euripides' *Orestes*, we posited that the eponymous hero's *synesis* of *ta deina* is conceptualized as inner pollution manifested as madness (v. 396: *ἡ σύνεσις, ὅτι σύνοιδα δεῖν' εἰργασμένος*). We will return to issues of *synesis* emerging as a (normative) expectation in Greek cults in the Hellenistic period[48] in Volume II, but for now let us observe that the same Lindian regulation pairs the request for a pure *gnome* with the request to worshippers that they be unaware of any terrible issue, that is, have no knowledge of any wrongdoing: *μηδὲν αὑτοῖς δεινὸν συνειδότας* (vv. 6–7); the reference to a clear conscience thus reveals what constitutes part of the purity of the *gnome* expected in the sanctuary.

[46] As Chaniotis 1997: 158 remarks: '[der Text] ist ausschließlich an den inneren Menschen interessiert.'

[47] *LSCG* 139.3–5.

[48] A much-discussed yet still insufficiently understood *LSCG* 130 of the third century BC Astypalaea seems to be one of the earliest examples of the normative expectations committed to the worshippers' conscience, on which see Robertson 2013: 231–2: [ἐ]*ς τὸ ἱερὸν μὴ ἐσέρπεν ὅστις μὴ ἁγνός ἐστι, ἢ τελεῖ ἢ αὐτῷ ἐν νῷ ἐσσεῖται* ('No one shall enter the sanctuary who is not pure. Either he shall see to it, or it shall be on his mind'). Robertson argues that the inscription implies that those who do not obey the rules of purity (possibly exhibited nearby) were threatened with a burden of guilty conscience.

'Best' (that is, a 'clear') conscience is also attested in a further *programma*, from the poorly preserved shrine of Psithyros in Lindus. In early third century AD, a ritual norm defines possessing good *syneidos* as a prerequisite for ritual action—for successful performance of the sacrificial ritual, the worshipper has to have the best (*sc.* a clear) conscience: *θύιν οἷς καὶ τὸ συνειδὸς ἄριστον*.[49]

With regard to the qualifiers of inner purity and pollution, the inscriptions are remarkably uniform in their choice of vocabulary to designate inner purity. The adjective *katharos* is most frequent, and, as in case of literary evidence, it can be applied to a wide variety of nouns: it qualifies *nous*, *psyche*, *phren,* and *gnome.* In one instance the cognate verb *kathairo* is used. In another, *hagnos* refers to the *nous*; in some cases we can observe that the state of being *hagnos* is defined exclusively as the state of inner purity (e.g. Epidaurus, Mytilene, Rhodes). With regard to inner impurity, we encounter *phauloi* twice as designating worshippers who are inwardly impure; in one instance they are equated with those whose *nous* is not pure (*ou kathareuei*) and who are engaging with the unjust. *LSS* 91 stands out in respect to the detailed vocabulary used to depict different types of inner pollution: a visitor should be neither *enages* (subject to divine wrath), *anagnos* (impure[50]), nor *athesmos* (guilty of transgression).

INNER PURITY AND POLLUTION: RELIGIOUS CATEGORIES OR METAPHORS?

Now that we have outlined the main features of the terminology employed for inner purity and pollution in the literary evidence and in the sacred regulations, one further question regarding the language remains to be answered: how is the language of inner purity and pollution used? To what extent are we dealing with literal and to what extent with metaphorical use of language?

In his study of the idea of purity in ancient Judaism, Jonathan Klawans argues 'that many biblical and postbiblical traditions believed sin to have its own distinct and *nonmetaphorical* defiling force'.[51] The majority of previous scholars who have discussed the idea of purity in ancient Judaism have propounded the view that expressions relating to purity and impurity were in some cases used figuratively, as metaphors for moral and religious

[49] *LSS* 86.3. See also *LSAM* 20.15–20, which specifies knowledge of immoral deeds as a reason to deny access to the sanctuary; first century BC Philadelphia, with Chaniotis 2012: 131–2.

[50] *anagnos* is here used to refer to the body and the soul, ll. 4–5.

[51] Klawans 2000: 11, italics in the original.

behaviour: for instance, in order to illustrate someone's moral depravity.[52] Purity and impurity were perceived as cultic matters first and foremost.

Klawans argues at length against previous scholarship which perceived the references to moral pollution as metaphors. If the language of purity and pollution is used figuratively and metaphorically, then moral impurity did not exist as a religious category in ancient Judaism; rather, the passages Klawans discusses employ the language of purity and pollution not in its literal meaning but figuratively, in order to illustrate, for instance, moral blamelessness and honesty in case of purity, and moral badness in case of impurity.[53] In short, 'when purity language is used metaphorically, then no real defilement or purification is actually taking place'.[54]

Klawans posits that moral impurity was not a metaphor, but was perceived as a specific type of impurity in ancient Judaism. In his view, moral impurity results from what are believed to be immoral acts, especially sexual sins, idolatry, and bloodshed. It is different from ritual purity, insofar as it is not temporary or contagious and cannot be ameliorated by rites of purification. Moral impurity, although not contagious, could nevertheless pollute the land of Israel and the sanctuary of the god, and could lead to all the inhabitants of the land being subject to exile.[55]

This type of inner impurity is similar to the ancient Greek concept of grave metaphysical pollution, which is a consequence of polluting action and results in divine *agos*.[56] Robert Parker labelled such pollution 'metaphysical', whereas Robin Osborne, in our view misleadingly, uses the term 'metaphorical' for it.[57] Scholars of Greek religion are generally in agreement with regard to the status of grave metaphysical pollution: even though its source was not polluting matter but polluting action, some acts were perceived as so transgressive with regard to the religious and social order that they triggered a grave pollution and incurred divine punishment. In ancient Greek culture, as in ancient Judaism, this type of pollution was not perceived as directly contagious. However, in ancient Greece grave metaphysical pollution did provoke a significant amount of anxiety, since the whole community could be engulfed in the divine act of vengeance. The consequences of moral impurity in ancient Judaism were more drastic, since moral pollution could result in the exiling of the whole people from their land.

The consensus among scholars of Greek religion is that metaphysical impurity is attested as a belief in ancient Greece, and that passages which

[52] A notable exception is Adolf Büchler's 1927 monograph *Studies in Sin and Atonement in the Rabbinic Literature of the First Century*, which discusses the defiling force of sin.

[53] On purity and metaphor, Klawans 2000: 32–6.

[54] Klawans 2000: 33. [55] Klawans 2000: 1–31.

[56] See 'Metaphysical Pollutions' in the Introduction chapter (pp. 29–32).

[57] Parker 1983: 145; Osborne 2011: 171–3—misleadingly, since, if pollution is a metaphor, no actual defilement is taking place.

outline the pollution of an oath-breaker, for example, are not employing language in a metaphorical sense but use the language of pollution literally, to describe a specific type of inner defilement.

Since our book argues in favour of the existence of a belief in an inner pollution which does not result from polluted matter or incorrect actions but from mistakes and transgressions of the self, committed against ritual norms and divinely sanctioned social rules, we too should address the question of whether there is genuinely a defilement taking place or are we dealing with purity language used metaphorically. Is Pythagoras' ritually pure soul (*psyche hagneusa*) a metaphor for a pious or morally blameless worshipper, or is he talking about a specific type of ritual purity?

In our view, inner pollution and purity are not metaphors. Already the existence of sacred regulations which demand inner purity as a condition for entry to a sanctuary prove that *phronein hosia* or pure *nous*, *phren*, *gnome*, and *psyche* are not literary figures but literal requests which should be taken at face value. Furthermore, in the literary passages we have discussed, demands for inner purity are related to specific ritual actions and go hand-in-hand with demands for purity of body. The *Theognidea* and Xenophanes stress the importance of inner purity for sympotic rituals; Pythagoras couples purity of *psyche* with purity of clothes and body in the context of sacrifices; and Hesiod depicts an encounter with a river as divinity when he warns that those who neglect to purify their hands and free their mind of *kakotes* will be subject to divine resentment and punishment. It is divine resentment and punishment, paired with ritual failure, that results from inner pollution: Agamemnon's inner pollution renders the sacrifice a transgressive ritual; Theseus' curse performed with *anagnos phren* leads to divine anger; the *dysagnoi phrenes* of the Aegyptids in the context of their intended marriage and disrespect for the supplication rites are rituals which would lead to *agos* and acts that lead to hubris respectively.

A further argument in favour of the literal rather than metaphorical use of the language of inner purity and pollution in the passages we discuss is the temporality of these requests. For if inner purity here should be understood as a secondary use of terminology which has a different primary (literal) use, how are we to grasp this secondary use? How are we to imagine a *temporarily* morally good and blameless person? In the vast majority of cases under discussion, inner purity and pollution is to be understood literally and not as a metaphor.

Admittedly, the language of purity can be, and sometimes is, used metaphorically. In our discussions we highlight the passages where we think that this is the case. For instance, Hesiod's phrase *kakotet' ide cheiras aniptos* is a zeugma with a metaphorical use of *aniptos*. *Aniptos* ('unwashed') is used literally in relation to *cheiras* (hands) and figuratively in relation to

kakotet', to mean 'unpurified'. However, only *aniptos* is used figuratively whereas *kakotes* is not, and, as we argue in our chapter on Hesiod, this word is used consistently in *Works and Days* to denote moral badness. In this context, badness represents all religiously incorrect mental processes which must be dismissed with a self-purifying prayer in preparation for a ritual action.

In the *Theognidea* we find a whole passage where language of purity is used metaphorically (vv. 447–52):

> εἴ μ' ἐθέλεις πλύνειν, κεφαλῆς ἀμίαντον ἀπ' ἄκρης
> αἰεὶ λευκὸν ὕδωρ ῥεύσεται ἡμετέρης,
> εὑρήσεις δέ με πᾶσιν ἐπ' ἔργμασιν ὥσπερ ἄπεφθον
> χρυσὸν ἐρυθρὸν ἰδεῖν τριβόμενον βασάνῳ, (450)
> τοῦ χροιῆς καθύπερθε μέλας οὐχ ἅπτεται ἰός
> οὐδ' εὐρώς, αἰεὶ δ' ἄνθος ἔχει καθαρόν.
>
> If you wish to wash me, unpolluted and clear water
> will always flow from the top of my head,
> and you will find that I am in all activities like refined yellow gold
> to behold, when tested by a touchstone.
> Its very surface is never darkened by patina
> nor decay, but always has a pure shine.

As we argued above (pp. 116–17), the speaker uses the language of purification (*plunein*, *amiantos*, *katharos*), but the passage is not referring to a specific ritual action; rather, it refers to a scrutiny and testing of the strongly idealized moral and religious codes governing all aspects of the life of the *agathoi*. Verse 449 stresses the permanent state of purity and the totality of actions which are performed in a pure way (*πᾶσιν ἐπ' ἔργμασιν*…). Furthermore, the hypothetical framing (*εἴ μ' ἐθέλεις πλύνειν*…), the comparison of the speaker with gold, the purest of metals, and the claim to permanent and absolute purity all point towards an idealized *agathos*, rather than to a lived reality of Greek religion. Throughout the *Theognidea* we encounter a discourse which merges religious and social norms, and constructs a strongly idealized aristocratic moral code personified in the image of an *agathos* with a pure and straight *nous* which is permanently subjected to both social and divine scrutiny. Even though this image is strongly idealized, we can detect realities of lived religion in the *Theognidea*, such as, for instance, in the prayer to Apollo, who is asked to straighten (*orthosai*) the *nous* of the participants of the symposium. This prayer, which we argue represents a request for the purification of *nous*, does reflect the realities of Greek religious life, since here the purity of mind is temporary and a necessary requirement for a specific ritual action.

INNER PURITY FROM A DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVE

In our Introduction we have argued that a discussion of inner purity and pollution should be mapped out on both diachronic and synchronic axes. Let us first briefly summarize our conclusions regarding the diachronic aspects of purity beliefs. Beliefs are subject to change, and purity, as a system of social control, is also subject to change in the process of its ongoing negotiation with other systems of social control. Our chapter on Aeschylus' *Oresteia* provides a case study of the impact of the judicial system on the perception of homicidal miasma, and relatedly, on the significance of the inner self in the construction of inner purity and pollution. By tracing a sequence of three kin-killings, and by focusing on the complex pollution which befalls the killers and demands retributions in the form of further murders conceptualized as purifications, which, paradoxically, only trigger ever more complex cases of pollution, resulting in a situation so complicated that even the gods end up disagreeing on the degree and type of Orestes' pollution, Aeschylus remarkably represents pollution as a dynamic category, which is subject to change under the influence of the judicial system. In the *Eumenides* Aeschylus indicates a twofold change in the perception of homicide: he juxtaposes Argos, as a society with no courts, to ancient Athens, where Athena establishes the Areopagus court in order to enable a final verdict on the question of whether Orestes is polluted or not. However, by outlining the *aetion* of the first Athenian court, Aeschylus also invites the audience to compare and contrast the Athens from the mythic past with their city 'here and now'. In the fifth century BC there were five different homicide courts at Athens, with specific procedures put in place to try five types of killing, classified according to the motivation and the circumstances of the homicide, which trigger a differentiated level of pollution (from none to irredeemable). Had Orestes been put on trial in the Athens of Aeschylus' day he would have been tried at the Delphinium court, and, since his homicide was justifiable, he would not have been perceived as polluted. Undoubtedly, Aeschylus' *Oresteia* represents the most complex discourse on pollution of all extant tragedies. In the *Eumenides* the court is represented as the only institution which is able to resolve the pollution crisis which starts on the human plain, but then escalates into full-blown divine dissent. Ultimately, what has started as the tragedy of one family spirals into a potential disturbance of the divine order, and the whole city is liable to be engulfed in it as collateral damage. By representing the court as a mediator of stability in this situation, Aeschylus seems to point towards the change in perception of pollution as brought about by the development of the judicial system. It has been argued, most notably by Robert Parker and Angelos Chaniotis,[58] that

[58] Parker 1983: 104–43; Chaniotis 1997: 148–54; 2012: 127.

the beliefs regarding pollution have indeed been influenced by the development of a judicial procedure which places more and more emphasis on the motivation of the homicide. This, in Chaniotis' words, 'paradigmatic case of ritual dynamics'[59] is a good illustration of the dynamic aspect of miasma and of its interplay with other systems of social control.

Significantly, homicide miasma plays an important role in Empedocles' thought too. For Empedocles, a contemporary of Aeschylus, murder is the 'original sin', *amplakia*, which leads to the ontological demotion of a god to a *daimon*, and it is murder which Empedocles sees as the greatest pollution and reinterprets to mean every act of killing. It is significant that Empedocles emphasizes the aspect of mental transgression when he depicts the *daimon*'s act of killing, and that he perceives his poetry as a revelation, which obliges the listeners to become *eusebeis* by learning about the underlying implications of shedding blood. He too, albeit in a quite hermetic and idiosyncratic way, stresses the importance of self-assessment and motivation in conjunction with incurring pollution.

With Empedocles we can also identify another influence on beliefs concerning inner purity and pollution, namely that of the eschatologies based on the assumption of the survival and transmigration of the inner self. Did changing attitudes towards the afterlife have an impact on beliefs regarding inner purity? Angelos Chaniotis has argued that, along with legal distinctions, the differentiated attitudes towards the afterlife brought the idea of inner purity to the fore in Attic drama, philosophy, and oratory in the fifth century BC.[60] One can certainly argue that, on the level of specific subsystems where we do detect the existence of beliefs that conduct in this life influences one's fate in the next life or afterlife, the requests for inner purity tend to be expressed with more urgency. It is nevertheless difficult to ascertain the degree to which these subsystems had a wider impact on the mainstream of Greek religion and to what extent such views capture broader certifiable realities of the Archaic and Classical periods beyond their immediate historical and religious contexts. If the gold leaves can be interpreted as evidence for 'Orphic' beliefs, they certainly do demonstrate that inner purity was at the heart of this subsystem of purity. Empedocles' philosophical teaching does lay special emphasis on a specific way of life as a means of purification and a prerequisite for ontological promotion, but how influential these beliefs were on other circles before the end of the fifth century BC is difficult to assess.

Generally speaking, from a diachronic perspective the beliefs regarding inner purity seem remarkably persistent, even if they do demonstrate significant divergences at the level of subsystems. From Hesiod to Euripides, we

[59] Chaniotis 2012: 127. [60] Chaniotis 2012: 128.

encounter evidence which suggests that a correct inner disposition in the context of ritual action matters, and that inappropriate thinking about a ritual and about the divinely sanctioned social norms generates inner pollution.

SUBSYSTEMS OF INNER PURITY ON THE SYNCHRONIC AXIS

Let us now turn to the synchronic axis. The aim of our individual chapters was to provide a discussion of inner purity and pollution as potential subsystems. As we outlined in our methodological outline in the Introduction, our approach has been shaped by Douglas' theory along with Valeri's corrective: that is, we perceive purity in general as a system with, in theory, many possible subsystems operating simultaneously, and potentially betraying the existence of many orders of classification. Let us turn now to these individual subsystems and outline some of their main features.

Hesiod's *Works and Days* provides a set of instructions for a Bronze Age farmer. Hesiod's view on inner purity is predicated on an assumption that the gods reward those who adhere to justice and punish transgressors. The religious and social vision of *Works and Days* is broad and profound, but the rewards for the pious and the just it promises are quite concrete: if the gods are pleased, the worshipper prospers, and is in a position to 'buy an allotment of another man' and not lose his own (vv. 340–1). Every single religious act must be performed with care and attention, since everything—including the inner self—is subject to divine scrutiny. The idea of the watchful gods is central to Hesiod's vision of piety and fundamental for the belief that the inner disposition, too, is subject to divine inspection.

The framework of the subsystem Xenophanes and the *Theognidea* represent is the exclusive circle of aristocratic symposiasts, members of the elite. The particular feature of this subsystem as represented in the *Theognidea* is that social scrutiny complements the notion of the watchful gods. Both the religious and the social behaviour of the Theognidean *agathos* are subject to constant divine and human inspection. The *Theognidea* accordingly redefine the notion of purity of mind to include general social behaviour as well. A *pistos nous* is *katharos* as well (vv. 87–9), and an *orthos nous* in a religious context corresponds to an *itheia gnome* in the social context. What Xenophanes and the *Theognidea* have in common is an attempt to construct a notion of exclusivity of purity by opposing it to others' impurity. The request to Apollo to purify the mind (*nous*) of the symposiasts by making it *orthos* in the *Theognidea* is predicated on the notion that only the *agathoi* can have a pure *nous* to begin with, since a good *nous* is a possession of the few (v. 1185). Furthermore, in the *Theognidea* the moral badness of the *kakoi*

is envisaged as a dangerous, contagious, and corrupting pollution (vv. 305–8). The striving for inner purity of the *agathos* provides a line of demarcation between social groups and serves as a tool of distinction from the *kakoi*. Even though Xenophanes and the *Theognidea* seemingly address the same audience, their weighing of purity is different: for Xenophanes it is an important religious category, but ultimately a ritual one, whereas in the *Theognidea* purity occupies a prominent position in the lifestyle of an *agathos* and, as both religious and social category, it even serves as a tool of social distinction.

Xenophanes' advice regarding good thinking and pious behaviour while drinking includes a demand for *euphemoi mythoi* and *katharoi logoi* (v. 14), which implies a process of purification of sympotic speech by rejecting some traditional tales and embracing others; he goes as far as specifying that the Titanomachies, Gigantomachies, and Centauromachies, 'figments of man of old', have no place in an ideal symposium (vv. 21–2). This rejection implies that the ability to assess the poetic tradition using the criterion of purity should represent one of the markers of cultural distinction of the *agathoi*. Therefore, while in Hesiod it does not seem that the notions of inner purity and pollution represent means of social demarcation, in both Xenophanes and the *Theognidea* a specific conception of inner purity represents a belief shared by the members of the in-group, and separating them from the out-group of the non-aristocrats.

The purification of sympotic speech from the potentially polluting poetry of other poets is taken to a further extreme by Empedocles, who constructs his own, unique subsystem. He envisages all poetry of others as *mania*, a form of inner pollution from which the gods must free him in order for him to receive a pure, religiously correct message. Empedocles also warns his pupil Pausanias that his own religiously correct revelation-poetry can only flourish in a mind which is purified of the notions of others, since these 'blunt thoughts' (Fr. B 110.7 DK).

In Empedocles' highly idiosyncratic subsystem purity occupies a central place. His doctrine amounts to a complete religious reformation, and is at the furthest possible remove from the notion of service of the gods as the dutiful performance of ritual actions. Strikingly, Empedocles' whole purity doctrine is conceptualized as a revelation; the extant fragments of his poetry lay bare that what is commonly conceptualized as pious behaviour and service of the gods is actually gross impiety and incurs grave pollution. In the passages where he implies a broad, exoteric audience, Empedocles seems to completely internalize the gods as focalizers of purity, since he teaches that purity is not only a ritual category, that is, not only a prerequisite for successful communication with the divine, but a way of life. Instead of the gods as focalizers of purity, Empedocles asserts that purity should be focalized through the inner self, the *daimon*. It is ultimately for the sake of this much-suffering and polluted *daimon* that inhabits them that humans must

reform their lives and strive for purification, not occasionally but constantly. Effectively, then, Empedocles replaces the Hesiodic 'the gods are watching' with 'your *daimon* is suffering'; this also means that inner purity is not only the most important form of purity, but that the striving for inner purification can improve one's lot in the next incarnation and, ultimately, help the *daimon* to reattain his divine status. Hence, Empedocles employs purity beliefs to provide an idiosyncratic doctrinal framework for the mediation of his teaching. This framework, ultimately, aims to establish an independent religious and philosophical tradition, with adherents accepting as true the knowledge concerning the nature of inner pollution acquired through revelation, the knowledge which is markedly divergent from and discrepant with the main tenets of Greek religious life.

Due to the nature of the Pythagorean corpus, it is difficult to ascertain the precise position that inner purity occupied in his teaching. Many rules ascribed to Pythagoras address the issue of ritual purity, and these tend to be particularly stringent and to make permanent the rules which are in Greek cult attested as temporary. This might be an indicator of the function of purity in group-formation. The passage we discuss (D.S. 10.9.6) envisages purity of the soul (*psyche*) as a temporary ritual state which is as important as purity of clothes and the body. Still, the emphasis seems to be on the moral aspects of purity, as the passage dismisses the ostentatious display of wealth in the form of expensive clothes in favour of cleanliness, and the body is not envisaged as simply clean, but as clean of 'every deed of injustice'. Pythagoras' interest in metempsychosis, and the philosophical discourse of the fourth century BC which conceptualized Pythagoras as an instructor on spiritual purification, are suggestive of inner purity occupying a prominent place in Pythagoras' concept of purity, but ultimately the extant evidence does not allow anything more than speculation.

With Heraclitus we are once more condemned to speculation, but in his case even the exact wording of the fragments is uncertain, so we cannot form any firm conclusions about his views on the role of inner purity. A considerable number of Heraclitean fragments address the issue of rituals, and some tackle the issue of purification. Based on this evidence, Heraclitus sets himself apart from the *hoi polloi* and essentially denies that the masses have a full understanding of the true nature of the gods and heroes, and hence that their rituals, too, are fundamentally flawed.

While the gold tablets display a significant engagement with issues of purity, the interpretative stance is, more than usually, dependent on inferences from the external evidence associated with the 'Orphics'. What seems evident, nevertheless, is the intrinsic nexus of the purity of the soul with the implicit and explicit eschatology of the gold tablets. The rite—and by that we should probably understand a cathartic initiation which frees the soul of stains—serves as preparation for the soul's direct encounter with Persephone.

In this sense, the traditional idea of purity as a prerequisite for obtaining proximity to the divine, attested in mainstream religious thought, seems to have been reformulated and radicalized through the extension of ritual space to the underworld: while the purity concepts of the tablets follow the logic and the language of traditional cults (employing *kathara* for the soul of the deceased, and *hagne* for the goddess), the soul is envisaged as ritually encountering the goddess in the underworld, where it ritually declares its purity to obtain a different status and place among the *euageis*. In this sense, and owing to their association with the eschatological expectations, the purity beliefs of the gold leaves stand apart from the rest of the evidence, and represent, functionally and conceptually, a separate purity subsystem. To what extent the issues of human morality as defined by interhuman relationships played a role in this subsystem, and whether the notion of inherited (Titanic) guilt ought to be inferred from references to purification and requital of 'unjust deeds', remains a thorny issue. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that the purity ideas represented in the gold tablets (especially the three found in a single grave in Thurii) served as a common religious denominator associated with a specific set of beliefs which provided a foundation for a distinct group identity.

In our view, the evidence from tragedy has a special weight. Up to this point we have referred to the employment and appropriation of discourses on inner purity, pollution, and ritual in philosophy and epic and sympotic poetry. While the role of inner attitudes for the efficacy of ritual has formed a part of religious discourse from Hesiod onwards, and has been associated with the performance of crucial rituals in a *polis*, with tragedy we are able to observe the sheer sweeping extent and the real significance of the discourse. One could claim that the evidence from the 'Orphics', Pythagoreans, Empedocles, and Heraclitus represents minority views: that it reflects the independent discourses of groups disassociated from the mainstream of *polis* religion. For Hesiod, one could object that the reference to inner attitude is not extensively elaborated; for both Theognis and Xenophanes, that it reflects, perhaps, the narrow world-view of the aristocratic *symposia*, with their particular moral concerns.

With tragedy, however, we find reflections on inner purity and pollution, and the inner, especially mental, attitude of the worshipper towards the gods on the central stage of the *polis*, at the very core of mainstream religious discourse, at the exact place where the meaning of gods and rituals is subjected to public scrutiny and contemplation. If, therefore, there were any possibility that one could make the claim (unjustified, we think) that the earlier discourses on inner purity were restricted to particular circles and excluded, perhaps, from mainstream traditions, the evidence from tragedy renders this finally impossible.

We propose, in fact, that the evidence from the tragedies suggests the centrality of the discourse on inner purity and pollution within the religious tenets of fifth-century Athens. Time and again, the tragic characters reflect on the purity or pollution of their mind and, occasionally, of the soul, and on their own performance of rituals, and search for the roots of their piety or impiety in their thinking. In some cases divine characters provide an insight into human minds, and decide to save or condemn them in accordance with what they detect. Time and again the outcome of the rituals characters perform is directly linked to their mental attitudes. These motifs, so widespread and as invariably complex as they are, must have been very well known to Athenian audiences already by Aeschylus' day, and we would advance the view, therefore, that the impact of earlier discourses on inner purity was anything but restricted. Furthermore, whereas all of the previous texts we have discussed—with the exception of Hesiod and, partly, Empedocles—address people of a specific social class or with specific intellectual predilections, tragedy is a literary form which addresses the totality of the *polis* and brings the most pressing issues of religion into the public forum.

What we find in tragedy, shining under the brightest lights of the public arena, is the discourse on inner purity and pollution which will subsequently find its particular articulation in Plato, and which will become part of Hellenistic and later religious thought. Purity of mind and purity of soul, and their opposites, determine the outcome of a ritual action. Gods know what you think, and what you think determines your relationship with gods. Your inner investment matters most.

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